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AN
EXPOSITION
OF
THE APOCALYPSE

ON
A NEW PRINCIPLE
OF
A LITERAL INTERPRETATION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DIATESSARON."



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INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SEVEN EPISTLES.

THE Seven Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia, contain the words of him who formerly spake on earth, and now speaketh from heaven; they are characterised by the same divine wisdom and purity, which pervaded all his holy teachings, while he sojourned among men. They are direct communications, and not through the medium of an angel. The Revelation of Jesus Christ—which he signified by his angel—begins when the Epistles have ended, or rather with the opening of the first seal, at the commencement of the sixth chapter; for the fourth and fifth chapters only unfold the presently existing state of things in heaven, “the things which are, not the things which are to be hereafter.”

8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

9. I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet ;

11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last : and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the Seven Churches which are in Asia ; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks ;

13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow ; and his eyes were as a flame of fire ;

15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace ; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16. And he had in his right hand seven stars : and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword : and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ; I am the first and the last.

18. I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches ; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

“ The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

This Book is not the revelation of St. John but a revelation to St. John, and through him to the Church of God ; it is a revelation, not a sealed book, and contains a descriptive narration of judgments yet to come upon the world ; written in intelligible language, which will have a literal accomplishment, and which will be consummated in the personal descent of God’s anointed king to assume the reins of universal government, and to be the acknowledged King of kings and Lord of lords. The whole contents of the book, from the opening of the first seal, have reference to this great event, it is therefore with great propriety entitled, “ The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

“ Which God gave unto him.”

Christ as God can receive nothing—but as man he receives all from God, and as man, God gave to him this revelation.

“ To shew unto his servants.”

It is no new thing for God to shew future events to his servants, it has been his pleasure to do so from

the beginning—to Enoch, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and onward through a long line of distinguished saints—and so it is written, “Surely the Lord will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Unto his servants it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven ; and unto them is this revelation given, which will place them on a vantage ground so that that day may not come unawares or overtake them as a thief.

“ Things which must shortly come to pass.”

The term shortly is not to be understood as measured by the standard of our “three score years and ten,” but by the scale of the world’s duration, and by the time occupied by events already accomplished. Four thousand years fulfilled all the preliminaries to the first advent, then the fulness of the time was come for God to send forth his son. The first advent is past, and all things which were written concerning it are fulfilled. Now the preliminaries to his second and final advent are going on ; when these are accomplished, the things recorded in this book will come to pass. Nearly two thousand years have elapsed since it was said they must shortly come to pass ; the period therefore cannot now be distant.

“ And he sent and signified it by his Angel.”

This Angel was one of the human family, a departed saint, whom the Lord commissioned with this important work ; he was “of his brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book.”

“ Unto his servant John.”

John was originally a fisherman of Galilee—when at an after period he was arraigned before the Jewish

Sanhedrim they regarded him as unlearned and ignorant—yet this man, of no importance in the estimation of the world, is accounted worthy to be the channel of this divine revelation. This is the same who “bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.”

Here is encouragement to all to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the sacred contents of this book ; a blessing from God is promised to the reader, and to such as hear it read, and preserve in memory the things which are written therein.

“For the time is at hand.”

This is a reiteration of the former statement that the things must shortly come to pass, and also a reason why we should become acquainted with those things, that, when they are being fulfilled, we may know that the Judge is at the door. If the time was at hand when this revelation was given, how much nearer must it now be ! If the night was then far spent, how much farther spent now ! The great work to be done between the first and second coming was the calling of the Gentiles. “God hath visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name.” When “the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled then shall the end come.” Now the times of the Gentiles have been of equal length with those of the Israelitish nation, from the date of their exodus from Egypt ; and, being so, it may reasonably be inferred that the time is really at hand.

“ John, to the Seven Churches which are in Asia.”

The Seven Churches are those over which John presided after his release from exile ; they were placed under his special jurisdiction. And Ephesus became his abode after the martyrdom of Timothy. The Epistles were for all churches, through all time, and until his coming again. The number seven is used as a symbol for completeness, and represents the One Universal Church.

“ Grace be unto you and peace.”

Grace is communicated from God ; in ourselves we are graceless—for in us, that is in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing—and so the apostle testified, saying, “ By the grace of God I am what I am,” but “ to every one that asketh it shall be given.” “ If any of you lack wisdom (saith St. James) let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.” Grace is to the soul what the sun and the rain are to the soil, and as the sun and rain come on all soils, so the grace of God cometh on all men, for the grace of God and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many, even to as many as have become dead through the offence of one man. The grace of God to all appears in bringing salvation to all. The kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man, appears, in that he died for all—and he died for all, because all were dead—but this grace may be received in vain, it may come as the rain comes upon the ground, which bringeth forth thorns and briers, and which is rejected and is nigh unto cursing ; grace may descend on hard and stony hearts, which are utterly insensible to its genial influence, it may be rejected, and so be withdrawn ; but

to them who perceive the grace of God in his kindness toward us by Christ Jesus, it will be continued. Such receive grace upon grace. They receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, and shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ. They are as the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, and receiveth blessing from God. Many resist the grace of God, and so continue without God because they love darkness. The Churches of Asia had received the grace of God. The apostle therefore desired for them that grace might continue and increase, and so their peace would abound.

“From him who is, and who was, and who is to come.”

This is a declaration of the eternity of God's existence. “From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” Whatsoever is created had a commencement, but the uncreated God had none. There is a date to the first atom of the universe, and before that date there was an eternal past in which Jehovah alone existed, possessing then, as now, all those infinite perfections with which he is endowed. Such as he was, such he is, and such he ever will be, “without variableness or shadow of turning,” in all the undiminished splendours of his own infinite greatness.

“And from the seven spirits who are before his throne.”

The number seven is used as a symbol of completeness or perfection of unity—this is the one only Spirit of the Father and of the Son, who proceedeth from both. The seven days forming the week signify the completeness of the works of creation, for “God saw every

thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." The seven horns, which appear upon the Lamb as it had been slain, denote all fulness of power, as it is written, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." Angels are spirits "great in power and might," but have limits both as to power and knowledge, but the Spirit of God, here designated as the "Seven spirits of God," is infinite and limitless, for, "Whither shall we go from Thy presence, whither shall we flee from Thy Spirit." He proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and yet in personality is distinct from both, "for there are three that bare record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." The distinctness of the personality of the Holy Ghost appears from the words of Christ to his disciples, when about to leave them. "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you"—and in these epistles all are invited to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To have the Spirit of God dwelling within us is to have also the Father and the Son, for "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Thus the Father and the Son are present in the person of the Holy Ghost, whose divinity is attested by the declaration of the apostle, "For the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God," and the deep things of God can only be penetrated by one who is equal with God. Thus the Holy Ghost, even as the Son, counts it no robbery to be equal with God, although humbling himself to take a subordinate place for the glory of the triune God. To him is assigned the unceasing employment of being the great operator and doer in all, and through

all, as it is written, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh," and again, "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."

"The faithful witness."

To witness is to bear testimony of another, and "this then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," he testified to the world that "God is love," and that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life," he was in his own person the living image or likeness of God; they who saw him saw the Father, he was the declarer of God, and the faithful witness for God. "He came a light into the world, that whosoever believed in him might not abide in darkness but might have the light of life. To be ignorant of God's character is to be in darkness, and in spiritual death; believing his testimony concerning God, we emerge into light, and this light is life. And "thus God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shineth in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Christ is the reflex of God, and therefore the "faithful witness."

"And the first begotten from the dead."

"He is the first that should rise from the dead and should shew light unto the people and to the Gentiles." He is the first-born among many brethren,

even of all who are counted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection from the dead.

“And the Prince of the Kings of the earth.”

His Kingdom is not of this world, it is of the world to come that these words are spoken, when He shall take unto him his great power and reign; then he will sit on the throne of his glory, and be the acknowledged King of kings and Lord of lords. He shall have a name which is above every name—that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow; of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Under him, a new and a glorious race of kings and princes shall arise, for thus it is written in the 45th Psalm, “instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth,” but the Prince of the kings of the earth is he whom the Father delighteth to honour, and to whom every knee shall bow.

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

This is true concerning all men. When the apostle said of Christ, “He loved me and gave himself for me,” he merely gave utterance to a truth which applied equally to all other men as to himself, for Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and he became so, purely from love, even as God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son—gave him to be a propitiation for the guilt of all, that sin might be purged, that all men, being thus dead to sin, might live unto righteousness; therefore, should every man reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ

our Lord. This is the ground of our confidence, and out of which the new principle of love proceeds, "for we love him because he first loved us."

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father."

This is the high and holy calling to which all are called, being embraced and included in "the gift of God which is eternal life." "For as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." We may never come into the realisation of this dignity and glory. We may be shut out through unbelief, but the truth remains unaltered, that he loved us and washed us from our sins, to make us kings and priests unto God and his Father. Unbelief is now the ground of condemnation, and for which, when continued to the end, there is no redemption. By unbelief we loose all the benefits of our union with Christ, by it the union is dissolved; for if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned. By being made kings, we become partakers of his glory, "for the glory which thou gavest me I have given them," and by being made priests, we have more immediate approach to God, and are made ministers of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, being of the order of the Melchizedek priesthood.

"Unto him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

"Worthy is the lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and

honour, and glory, and blessing," so sing the innumerable hosts of angels who excel in strength, who do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word. We cannot honour the Father without honouring the Son ; neither can we honour the Son without honouring the Father, for in the Son dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily.

" Behold, he cometh with clouds."

" This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." By a few solitary individuals only was he seen to go into heaven, but when he returns from heaven it will be widely different, for then

" Every eye shall see him."

The heavens shall declare his righteousness, and all the world shall see his glory. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. His coming shall be as the lightning which cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west. He shall be the great object of universal attention—the great, and the small, the young and the old, the rich and the poor—all, all shall look on him, not as unconcerned spectators, but as on their Judge, at whose tribunal they must stand and be judged, every one according to his works. As every eye beholdeth the natural sun, so shall the Sun of Righteousness be seen by all, and to them that have been looking for him ; to them that fear his name, he shall arise with healing in his wings, but to all others with inexpressible anguish and dismay.

His appearing will be preceded by a mysterious darkness, followed by light of a new and terrible description, for "a fire shall devour before him, and it shall burn up his enemies round about."

"And they also who pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

They who pierced him were the Jews, and they shall mourn as one mourneth for an only begotten. They shall be amazed to find that he whom they crucified is the true Messiah, and "Him that cometh in the name of the Lord;" and the nations shall wail, for all joy shall cease, and the mirth of the land be gone. A sudden and unexpected arrest shall be put upon every work and transaction of whatsoever description it may be. The judge may no more return to his bench, nor the trader to his wares, nor the husbandman to his field. For as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the day of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot—they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. "The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, shall (seek to) hide themselves in the dens and in the crevices of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face

of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand." For who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. He will come near to men to judgment, and will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord."

"I am Alpha and Omega."

"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old, I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth. Then was I by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men. Thus was he in the beginning.

He is also the Omega or the last, for as all things are by him, so are all things for him.

“ I John, who also am your brother.”

This is the true brotherhood, because it will continue. The elder brother is Christ, who is not ashamed to call us brethren, saying, “ I will declare thy name unto my brethren ; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” Brotherhood in the flesh terminates at death ; brotherhood in the Lord never terminates ; all present connections are but figures of the true, and are for ever dissolved at death. Father, brother, sister, husband, wife, children, &c., all these relations cease, and are no more recognisable, as “ In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, “ so in the resurrection are there no husbands, and wives, and children, and brothers, and sisters ; but instead thereof, a far closer and more glorious connection, viz., the church, the body of Christ, and every one members thereof, and members one of another, and as the members of a man’s own body are dear unto him, “ for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it even as the Lord the church,” so will the members of Christ be to each other, it will be a closer and more intimate union than any present relationship, while it will be indissoluble and eternal.

“ And companion in tribulation.”

Did they share in the afflictions of the gospel ? so did he ; he was a partaker of the sufferings of Christ, who himself was made perfect through suffering. John had oftentimes been in prison, and was at present an exile for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. “ And all who will live godly in

Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you ; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

“ And in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

As the people of God are companions in tribulation so are they companions in expectation, and their expectation is one, viz., the coming and kingdom, and glory of Christ ; this is the salvation for which they hope, when the sons of God shall be manifested in their glorified bodies, and be for ever with the Lord. This is their expectation, and for this they wait. Mutual expectants of the kingdom they patiently wait for it, and strive together that patience may have her perfect work. “ As the husbandmen waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain, be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

“ Was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

John was an exile and a prisoner, yet not ashamed, because not thence transported as an evil doer, but for the word of God ; he was there in the honourable character of a sufferer for his “ witness to the truth,” and had occasion to glorify God who had counted him worthy to suffer shame for his name. “ The testimony of Jesus Christ,” is the gospel which he commanded, should be preached or declared to every creature, and this is the gospel, “ That God hath given to us eternal life.”

“ I was in the Spirit.”

To be in the spirit is to be possessed by the Holy Ghost, and has a much larger significance than merely being under the influence of divine truth. The spirit of the Lord was upon him, he saw in the spirit, and spake by the spirit, and he was for the time under the direct power and control of the spirit; as demons are devil-possessed, so he was God-possessed, and to be thus filled with the Holy Ghost is the high privilege, although the now rare attainment of all God's children. The promise of the Comforter is given to all who believe in Jesus. “Unto you, and unto your children, and unto all that are afar off, even unto as many as the Lord our God shall call.” It is a gift not necessarily connected with believing, “for hundreds believed before the Holy Ghost was given, for the Holy Ghost was not given until Christ was glorified.” It is not a gift by which believing is produced, for, on the contrary, it is written that “He is given to them who do believe,” not to cause them to believe, but because they do believe. “In whom (says the Apostle), in whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.” It is the true anointing, given after the cleansing of our consciences by the blood of Christ. “The anointing which abideth in us, and teacheth us of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” John was in the spirit, was walking in the spirit, and was led by the spirit on that day, and at that particular hour, when Christ appeared to him. How good it is to be found in the way! So it was with Cornelius, when the Angel of God appeared to him, and many others who might be named. Had John been otherwise, had he been

lukewarm and languid, he might never have been favoured with this wonderful vision, but he waited on God, and yielded himself to the powerful operation and divine endowment of the Holy Ghost.

“ I was in the Spirit in the Lord’s day.”

It was on the first day of the week that this wonderful vision occurred—here for the first time, and indeed the only time in Scripture called the “ Lord’s Day”—but ever since it has been so designated by the church, in honour of him, and in commemoration of an event of the utmost importance to mankind, viz., the demonstration of a resurrection from the dead ; but there is no authority for calling the first day of the week the Sabbath Day. Nor do the commandments applicable to the Sabbath have reference to the Lord’s Day ; but if any Gentile Christian consider it incumbent on himself to honour the Sabbath Day and keep it holy, it is the seventh, and not the first day that he must devote to that purpose, for on the seventh day did God rest from all his works which he had created and made, therefore he blessed the Sabbath Day and sanctified it. The Sabbath is a shadow of good things to come. It shadows out “ his rest,” into which Joshua conducted not the Israelites. for then he would not afterward have spoken of another day, saying to David, “ If ye will enter into his rest, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.” There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God, the type of which coming rest is the Sabbath, but whether that day is required to be observed of the Gentile believers as a day more holy than other days admits of considerable doubt, from the fact of its never having been enforced by the Apostle on the

Gentile converts, nor alluded to as a day distinguishable from others. To the Romans he writes that men were at liberty if they choose to esteem one day above another, or if they choose also to esteem every day alike, a proposition which he would not have made had the divine commandments regarding the Sabbath been intended for "those among the Gentiles who believe;" and the observance of the Sabbath, or indeed any part of the Hebrew ritual is not found among the decrees which were sent from the Church at Jerusalem "to the Gentiles to keep." They were "to keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication," but no order is given them respecting the Sabbath, which order the Gentile converts would have required, as that day was to them as unusual and strange as were all the other festal days of the Jews. There is no commandment either respecting the first day of the week. On that day the churches in all places, by a kind of mutual understanding, came together to break bread, and it was named the Lord's Day, a day sacred to the memory of him who rose from the dead. It is a day "much to be remembered," and it is good that there should be a total relinquishment or suspension of business, that the mind may have full leisure for the contemplation of the glorious objects of which the first day of the week is the lively reminiscence; while at the same time not suffering it to engender a feeling of bondage, as if it demanded greater holiness than other days, as if that day only was not our own—no day is our own—but all days and hours, by day and by night, as well as we ourselves, belong to Him who bought us with a price, whose we are, to love, and to serve, and to obey, at all times, and in all places, and under all circumstances, whose service is perfect freedom.

Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.

“And heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.”

“This voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.” This was spoken with reference to the testimony borne to the Son. Now it is the voice of the Son, and yet the Godhead is one. That trumpet voice was the same which was heard on Mount Sinai by more than a million of people, and was so exceeding loud and overwhelming in its majesty as to cause all who heard it to tremble. They besought Moses saying, “Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die.” The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty, it breaketh the cedars of Lebanon, it shaketh the forests, and divideth the flames of fire, and by its glorious power shall rend the heaven and the earth. He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God. It will reverberate and be heard from end to end of the earth, for as every eye shall see him, so every ear shall hear his voice, “for the Lord will cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.” This was the voice which John heard, modulated, so as to enable him to endure it, and in the first instance sounded from behind him, so as not to overwhelm, but gradually prepare him for the further communications he was to receive,

“Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest write in a book, and send it to the Seven Churches which are in Asia. Unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.”

Alpha is the first, and Omega the last letter, in the Greek alphabet, and indicates that he is the originating cause of all things—“for God created all things by Jesus Christ”—and he is the end for which all things exist.

“And what thou seest write in a book.”

It was not a message to be transmitted by word of mouth, but to be committed to writing as was the law of Moses and the Scriptures of the prophets, and the epistles or letters of the apostles, that it might become the subject of thought and of careful study by those to whom it was sent; first, to the Seven Churches which were in Asia, then to all the Churches scattered throughout the world, and so handed down from age to age—until the time should come when the things “which are to be hereafter should be fulfilled.”

“And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks.”

The golden candlesticks which represented the Seven Churches, explain to us the mystery of the candlestick which stood in the holy place in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, which was made of pure gold, of beaten work, his shaft, his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers; six branches going out of the sides thereof, three on the one side, and three on the other, consisting of seven

lamps. It was placed in the first or outer tabernacle, called the tent of the congregation, over against the table of shew bread, on the side of the tabernacle southward; and the seven lamps were lighted before the Lord, with pure oil, olive beaten, and commanded to be kept perpetually burning, and this was the sole illuminator of this division of the holy place. The inner sanctuary, separated from the outer by a veil of blue and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, called the most holy place, was supernaturally lighted up, and none dare enter into it but the high priest alone, once in the year, on the great day of atonement. The candlestick, with its seven lamps continually burning, represented, and was a symbol of the Church of God, thus—"Ye are the light of the world." Truth is light—error is darkness. The church should be the pillar and ground of the truth, the container of truth, and by whom it should be declared or manifested, "for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light," but if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness. If the light in the church be extinguished, then is the darkness profound; to accomplish this has been the aim of the adversary from the beginning, and he effects his purpose by corrupting the minds of men from the simplicity that is in Christ, by continued perversions of truth, by gradual encroachments, until all the bulwarks of sound doctrine are demolished, and the foundations uprooted. These Churches in Asia, symbolized by the seven candlesticks, instead of going on to burn with a still purer and brighter flame, gradually dimmed in their lustre, the silver was changed into dross, and the wine mixed with water; the flame flickered and died, and the candlesticks were removed out of their place; some remains there are of churches in one or two of the cities from which they took their name, but they

bear no resemblance to the originals, either in doctrine, or discipline, or government.

“ And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man.”

It was he, the unchanging and unchanged ; yet the outward circumstances were so altered that John was unable to realize him. The person on whom he now looked was the same meek and lowly Jesus on whom his eyes had often rested with holy delight ; he who had gone in and out amongst them, full of grace and truth, and who in the days of his flesh poured forth prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared, being in all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin. Yes, the kernel in all its integrity was there, but how greatly altered was the shell. When John saw him last his glory was veiled, for not until the cloud received him out of their sight did he assume his glory—that glory which he had with the Father before the world was—then he ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. Now in his glorified body he appears to John

“ Clothed with a garment down to the foot.”

Before man sinned he was naked, and was not ashamed, but immediately on sinning he discovered his nakedness, and hid himself from the presence of the Lord God, who made for them coats of skins and clothed them. Before he fell, he stood before God on the footing of his own innocence, but now our standing before God is on the footing of the merits of another, even Christ, who is made of God unto us “ righteousness,” thus we are accepted in the beloved,

and in him we are complete. The garment which he wears is his own—his own righteousness—and yet not his own, for “He through the eternal spirit presented himself without spot unto God,” and thus it is the righteousness of God which is unto all and upon all them who believe. With this white robe we are now presented.

“And girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”

The golden girdle symbolizes truth, as it is written, “let your loins be girded about with truth.” As the devil is a liar, and the father of it, so is Christ the “truth.” His name is “faithful and true;” with him “it is impossible to lie,” because it is antagonistic to his nature, he is the perfection and soul of truth, which is here symbolized by the golden girdle. Gold is the most precious of metals, and represents truth, which is more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold. All his saints shall be clothed in white robes, and also have golden girdles, because they have been followers of him who is the truth. “Every one who is of the truth heareth my voice.”

“His head and his hairs were white like wool,
as white as snow.”

When Philip desired of Jesus that he would show them the Father, he told them that in him they beheld the Father, and so we find the description given by Daniel of the ancient of days is the same as now given of the appearance of the Son of Man. “The hair of his head was like the pure wool, and his garment was white as snow; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten who is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him.”

The snowy whiteness of the hair of the head of our great high priest indicates the purity and stainlessness of his soul. Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

“And his eyes were as a flame of fire.”

As the fire penetrates all bodies with its vivid subtle particles, so do the eyes of Christ penetrate into all hearts; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. He needeth not that any should testify of man, for he knoweth what is in man, “he knoweth the very secrets of the hearts, and will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it hath been good or whether it hath been evil.”

“And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.”

As fire consumeth all things, so will the Lord in the day of his wrath, tread down with his feet, as of burning brass, all the workers of iniquity; they shall be as ashes under the soles of his feet, for he will tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury, and of all his enemies it shall be said in that day, “there are the workers of iniquity fallen, they are cast down, and shall not be able to arise.”

“And he had in his right hand seven stars.”

The seven stars are the Angels of the Seven Churches. The angel was the presiding minister, and responsible head in the several churches that were planted, and he was a star in the right hand of Christ. The stars in the heavens are but symbols,

the true stars are the faithful messengers of Christ, who "delivereth souls," and who "turn many to righteousness," they, as stars, shall shine for ever and ever. The stars were held in his right hand to signify that all their strength and power come directly from him—they are sustained and upheld by Christ, "without whom they can do nothing"—"who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." But the stars, while held in his right hand, are not inanimate objects that may be moved at pleasure, but responsible agents, who may or may not continue under the leading and directing hand of their God.

"And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."

The sword proceeding out of his mouth is for judgment—"he will fight against them with the sword of his mouth," and it needs not as with other combatants to be held in his right hand; his sword is the word going forth from his lips—"with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked," "he will kill them with death," "he will take them away, and pluck them out of their dwelling-place, and root them out of the land of the living;" he will, by the breath of his lips, by the volition of his will, cast them down into destruction; "they shall be brought into desolation as in a moment, and be utterly consumed with terrors." As by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth, so, by the same word shall the wicked perish, and the enemies of the Lord be as the fat of lambs, they shall consume, into smoke they shall

consume away. His word is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, for the instant he wills destruction, that instant it comes, and who shall be able to escape out of his hand? Oh that men would kiss the Son before he be angry, and they perish from the way. When his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they who put their trust in him.

“And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.”

His glory, when he was on earth, was veiled, except to three of his disciples, and to them only on one occasion, when they became eye witnesses of his majesty, and “his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was bright as the light.” On that occasion it was the glory of the Father, and his own glory—which he had with the Father before the world was—that rested upon him, but was not again manifested even after his resurrection; for although he appeared often to his disciples, there was nothing distinguishable in his external appearance from other men, excepting only that he appeared and vanished at pleasure, clearly demonstrating that if he was not a spirit, he possessed a body spiritual, although tangible and under laws different to those which regulate our corporeal frames, by which also he rose gradually into the clouds and disappeared from the eyes of his disciples when he assumed his regal glory, and thus he appeared soon after to his persecutor Saul. “I saw, said he, in the way, a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them who journeyed with me.” This is that sun which shall illumine the new Jerusalem, which is the temple of God, and the true paradise up to which the apostle in vision was caught. This is that sun

which shall illumine the earthly Jerusalem, "for the Lord God shall be to thee an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."

"He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," he is still "meek and lowly in heart," his great elevation to the highest heavens has made no alteration in the tenderness, and love, and pity, and uniform kindness which he displayed on earth. He who graciously permitted his disciple to recline upon his bosom, had undergone no change since his ascent to the throne of God; still his external appearance had now impressed on it a grandeur and a glory which overawed his former confiding disciple to such a degree that the most perfect prostration resulted from the sight. "I fell at his feet as dead." If the righteous cannot stand before him, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Where shall they appear whom he calls his enemies? John had often seen the Lord, had looked upon him, and his hands had handled of the word of life, but now he was struck to the earth and became insensible by the glory of that sight. Thus it was with Daniel to whom the Lord appeared in a vision ages before—"he was clothed in linen, his loins were girded with fine gold of Uphay, his body was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, his eyes as lamps of fire, his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." Straightway, he adds, there remained no strength in me, my comeliness was turned in me into corruption. So also with Isaiah, who saw his glory, and spake of him. "Woe is me, for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

“ And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not.”

Behold the kindness and love of God our Saviour. His gentle hand now rests on the head of his beloved but awe stricken disciple, while the gracious words proceed from his lips, “ Fear not.” If the Lord bid us fear not, what have we to fear? If he say peace, who shall lay anything to our charge? Terror is banished when we have the assurance of peace with God, and this peace we have through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“ Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth, and was dead.”

It is because he who was dead now lives, that all occasion for fear or slavish terror should be banished. Christ is risen. We are not now in our sins ; he loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and therefore his words to us are, Fear not. If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins, but if Christ be risen, your faith is not vain, for ye are not in your sins. How could we be in our sins, seeing it is written, “ when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of God.” His resurrection is the demonstration that his offering is accepted, and that he is now the approved of God, as the second Adam, our new representative, in whom we have eternal life.

“ And behold I am alive for evermore.”

Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him, for in that he died, he died unto sin (an offering for sin) once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. “ He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of

days, for ever and ever." He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Thou wilt prolong the king's life, and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God for ever, and because he continueth ever, he hath an unchangeable priesthood ; for the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

" Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death."

So be it ; so would we have it, for the Lord is our redeemer, and because he lives, we shall live also. In his resurrection we have the pledge of our own. The keys of hell and of death are wrested from the grasp of the oppressor, of him who had the power of death, and are now in the possession of him who is our friend and brother ; who spoiled principalities and powers, having entered into the domains of the enemy, and bound the strong man, and taken possession of all his goods.

" Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

The things which are, referred to the then existing state of the Seven Churches of Asia, and "the things which are to be hereafter," to the events connected with the revelation or manifestation of Christ at his second advent, the narration of which events commence after the Epistles to the Seven Churches have ended, beginning at the fourth chapter. The mystery of the seven stars and of the seven candlesticks are explained by our Lord himself—the latter represent and signify the Seven Churches, and the former the

Angels or presiding Ministers in those Churches, and nearly thus plainly are all the mysteries throughout the book explained ; for it was not intended by God that the book should be a mystery, but the revelation of a mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, but now is made manifest, or designed to be manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known the judgments which are immediately to precede and to usher in the coming of our Lord.

CHAPTER II.

1. UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus write : These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks :

2. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them who are evil : and thou hast tried them who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars :

3. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake has laboured, and hast not fainted.

4. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

7. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write : These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive :

9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of

them who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days : be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write : These things saith he who hath the sharp sword with two edges :

13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is : and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

16. Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches : To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write : These things saith the Son of God, who hath

his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass ;

19. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works ; and the last to be more than the first.

20. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

22. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23. And I will kill her children with death ; and all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts : and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden.

25. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

26. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations :

27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers ; even as I received of my Father.

28. And I will give him the morning star.

29. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

“ Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write.”

Ephesus is the only church of the seven to whom a previous epistle is sent by the apostle St. Paul. "The city itself was anciently distinguished among the cities of lesser Asia, and famed for its magnificent Temple of Diana, to whom worshippers came from all parts, and the citizens themselves were madly devoted to her, and proud of the magnificence of her temple. Both Paul and Apollos laboured here, the former about three years on his second visit, when a great and effectual door was opened to him, and very many who had dealt in sorcery gave their books of magic to the flames, amounting in value to several thousand pounds sterling. Timothy was the first ordained angel over the church in Ephesus." It was about thirty years after his ordination that this epistle was sent, being adressed to the angel as the responsible head, to whom had been committed the care of their souls, and who had to watch for them as those who should give account. The angel was the presiding minister, elder or ruler in all their assemblies, and much depended on the faithfulness with which he exercised the trust reposed in him.

"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."

Christ holdeth in his right hand the ministers of the churches, he upholds and supports them, and gives them strength proportioned to their day, and to every one of them his word is the same as to the Apostle of the Gentiles. "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness." But on their part a continual dependance on him is necessary for the supplies of grace which he is always ready to give. The stars in his right hand are accountable agents, and are not held there compulsorily ;

they are upheld by Christ according as they rest under his directing arm. He worketh in us to will, and to do of his good pleasure, and we through him work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. "He walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks." The seven candlesticks represent the whole Church, and Christ is in the midst of all, and in the midst of each. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them to bless them and to do them good." He is present by the Holy Ghost who proceedeth from the Father, and the Holy Ghost is one with the Father and with the Son. With Christ also is the residue of the Spirit, for with him is the Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

"I know thy works."

How much is comprehended in this short sentence, and what was true of the Church of Ephesus, is true of all the churches unto the end of time. He knows our works, and our works evince the state of our hearts. As a tree is known by its fruit, so does the outward life denote the inward character, therefore by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. The tongue is the index to the heart, and so it is written, "a good man, out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things." He weighs our works in the scales of the sanctuary, and will determine whether we are or are not wanting on that day when he will lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plumb line.

"And thy labour, and thy patience."

It is not manual labour, the labour of the hands, neither is it mental exertion, the intellectual efforts of literary men, but it is the labour of love which is here referred to, "the work of faith and the labour of love," and as St. Peter writes, "besides this giving all diligence we are to add to our faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity," for if these things be in us and abound, they make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for so an entrance shall be administered to us abundantly into his everlasting kingdom and glory, and thus we make our calling and election sure. It is a labour, but not a fatiguing labour, for "his yoke is easy, and his burden is light;" still it is a constant warfare, a life of faith in continual conflict with sensible objects requiring unceasing watchfulness and prayer. It is a life-long labour, continually sustained by hope, hope resting on the sure foundation, the stone, the tried stone, the precious corner stone, Christ Jesus.

"And how thou canst not bear them who are evil."

The disciple must be as his master, and of him it is recorded in the Psalms. "I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked." The man who is witness to evil, and does not reprove it, will be held as being himself a participator, but all who truly hate evil will bear testimony against it.

"And hast tried them who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

The Apostle to the Gentiles appealed to the mighty signs and wonders which God had wrought by him, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, as a proof of his apostleship. "Truly," said he, "the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds ;" all who were called of God to this distinguished office, abounded in supernatural evidences of their high mission, "for by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people." And with great power gave the apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, but those arrogant pretenders, being tested or tried, not by their words, but by "the power," for the kingdom of God cometh not in word but in power (see 1st Cor. iv. 19, 20), were found to be false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. They were unsupported by the "powers" of the world to come, were destitute of those evidences which, had they been apostles, they must have possessed, and were therefore pronounced to be liars. Herein, however, is shewn, after the church had existed thirty years, the possibility of apostles existing, other than the twelve originally ordained, otherwise it would have been unnecessary to test their pretensions. Apostles were no doubt intended to be a standing ministry in the Church, as the Apostle Paul clearly shows, both in his first Epistle to the Corinthians and in his Epistle to the Ephesians. Apostles were given along with the other ministries, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. It is believed that a great and genuine revival of pure primitive

Christianity must take place just “before the beginning of sorrows,” for this “gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all nations ;” and preached, “not in the words which man’s wisdom teach, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,” preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. In those days—and they are surely not far distant—when the Church of God shall come to be properly organized, there will again be apostles, for these are the master builders of the spiritual temple, a temple to be completed at length amid shoutings of grace unto it ; a temple composed of living stones, chosen of God, and precious, and destined to be for ever a habitation of God through the Spirit, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, upon which all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

“And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”

God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love, which we have showed toward his name, in that we have ministered to the saints, and do minister. Nothing done for Christ will be overlooked by him ; the cup of cold water, given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not pass without a disciple’s reward. The Ephesians had borne reproach, had conflicted with temptations, had resisted, striving against sin, in patience possessing their souls, and for his name’s sake, and because his name was dear to them, they laboured, and did not faint, of all which he was fully cognizant, for he walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and his eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers.

“ Nevertheless I have a charge against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”

It was not a somewhat or a small matter, but a serious charge which the Lord had against this church, that instead of going on to perfection, they were retrograding and going back. The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day ; but their path was not so, there was a great declension in their love, he was the same, but their love had deteriorated, and they did not now see the same beauty in him that they should desire him. At first their love was so intense to “ God manifest in the flesh,” that like the Galatians, they could have plucked out their eyes, and given them to those who were but the instruments of their illumination ; but the vision of his glory, instead of becoming clearer day by day, was becoming dim, and their love on the decrease—a spiritual disease, a gradual estrangement and alienation from him was growing upon them, which would, if remedial measures were not adopted, end in spiritual death, in total separation from him, and thus they would become twice dead, plucked up by the roots, for it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance. The Ephesians had not yet fallen away, they had not cast off their first faith, neither was their love to Christ extinguished ; but they were backsliding, they were retrograding, they were waxing cold, and Christ cannot be pleased with a waning affection. His is a burning love to us, and craves a full return.

“ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.”

Remember how precious I was to you when first "my kindness and love toward man appeared." Remember how your hearts burned within you at the recollection of my sacrifice for you, and of the incorruptible crown which I have laid up for you. Remember the days when first ye were illuminated, and when the excellence of your God drew forth your most ardent aspirations after him. Recall to memory what you then were, what you then felt, and how you then longed after me, as the heart thirsteth after the water brooks, and contrast it with your present desires and emotions towards me, and repent and do the first works, bring back vividly to your memory those great truths which first stirred up your souls to bless the Lord. There is a fulness of excellence in the manifested God which no created mind can ever grasp—a length and a breadth—a height and a depth in the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge. There is therefore an amplitude of space for endless expansion. The Ephesian Church, instead of being at the highest summit of love at their first emerging into light, should have made it but the starting point for continual accessions of grace, instead of which it is necessary to bring them back to their original stand point, and from thence proceed onward and upward in endless enlargement, ever increasing in the knowledge of God. To do the first works was to recall to recollection the great truths which opened the eyes of their understanding when the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts. These truths are unchanged, and when fully realized, able as ever to produce the same glorious effects, being the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth. The truth which cleanses and sanctifies the soul never loses its power, and hence the urgent necessity for preserving it in memory. "Ye are saved," says the

apostle, "if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, for I declared unto you, first of all, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures;" and another apostle writes: "I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." Buy the truth and sell it not; buy it without money and without price, and when possessed of the inestimable treasure, hold it fast, part not with it, sell it not. The memory is a great and precious talent committed to our charge, and a responsibility of the greatest magnitude is attached to it. Neglected, it becomes torpid, and departs like smoke, but when diligently improved, there are no limits to its progressive powers; and when applied to hold and retain the truth as it is in Jesus, it becomes a talent greatly blessed, and carries with it its own reward. Truth is to the soul what light is to the body, hence truth is light, light from him who is its source, "for God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." The Ephesian Church could only do the first work by returning to the first or primitive truths which produced those first works.

"Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent."

This is a plain intimation that if the counsel now given was neglected, if this church in its head and all its members did not speedily return to their primitive love, the light would be wholly withdrawn from them, the truth would die out altogether, and thus the candlestick be removed. An assembly of people does not constitute a Church unless it consist of such as live in the truth and walk in the truth, for "the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth." If truth be departed, the light is extinguished, and the

candlestick removed, or if there, only in name. This deprivation of light is here threatened, and is applicable to all Churches, which, like Ephesus, have left their first love ; and as a church is but an aggregate of many single persons, the threatening must equally apply to every man whose heart departs from the Lord. If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him

“ Except thou repent.”

This concluding word shows the reluctance of our great high Priest to use the sword of judgment. He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. It is from necessity that he assumes a threatening attitude, not from choice ; he delights to dwell on their commendable points of character.

“ But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.”

When we love what the Lord loves, and hate what he hates, although in a far less degree, we become estimable in his sight. David was a man after his own heart, so must every son become, for how can two walk together except they be agreed. It is to be an endless association, Christ and his Church, and the most perfect harmony of soul must exist between them. “ That they all may be one, even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” The doctrines and deeds of the Nicolaitanes were vicious and idolatrous, insomuch that they sanctioned and encouraged lewdness and adulteries, as well as idolatrous sacrifices, declaring them to be things innocent and justifiable. It was against this heretical sect that the Epistle of James was in part directed. They maintained that as men were

justified by faith it was not necessary to maintain good works, that faith and works had no necessary connection, and that evil might be done by those who believed without the fear of penalty ; in a word, they turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and indulged themselves unrestrainedly in vice and crime. To such professors and their practices the Ephesian Church entertained abhorrence, and were of one mind with him regarding them, which he is graciously pleased to recognize.

“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

It is very precious to observe here the oneness of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. The Seven Epistles are all directly from Christ, and yet the Holy Ghost is declared to be the speaker at the end of each, “the words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father who dwelleth in me.” This was his language when on earth, and now when returned to heaven it is the same. In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and his voice is the voice of the Father, and also of the Holy Ghost. What then the Spirit hath thus spoken to the churches, let all hear, “whose hearts God hath opened to attend to the things which are written.” The inability to hear is in the will. “My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me, so I gave them up to their own heart’s lusts, and they walked after their own counsels. O that my people had hearkened to me, and Israel had walked in my ways, I should soon have subdued their adversaries, and turned my hand against their enemies. He then that hath an ear, or he who having an ear, is disposed to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

To overcome is to surmount a difficulty, to obtain a victory, to make a successful resistance against opposing enemies, and the conflict here is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickednesses in high places, and the weapons of attack and defence are not carnal, but spiritual, and are mighty, through God, to the bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Our weapons are, first, for an helmet, the hope of salvation ; for a breast-plate, the righteousness of God which is unto all, and upon all them who believe ; for a sword, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, quick and powerful ; and for a shield, the shield of faith, whereby we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil. Thus we are to take unto us the whole armour of God that we may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, “for prayer is to faith what the surrounding atmosphere is to our natural life, as in it we live and move, so in prayer does faith live. Prayer is the element in which faith exists, and without which it cannot survive. Prayer is the divinely appointed channel for the communication of all grace, and by it we draw nigh to God, and receive from him the necessary succours in all our temptations and trials. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith, who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God, and believing in Jesus as the Son of God, implies faith

in his blood, faith in his righteousness, and faith in him as our redeemer, who shall raise us to immortality and glory at his appearing. He who maintains this faith stedfast unto the end (i.e., until the period of dissolution) shall eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God, and so live for ever, for this is that tree of life which God prohibited man from eating after he had sinned. The Lord God said, "Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken; so he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden, cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." It was necessary to prevent our first parents and their posterity from partaking of fruit which would have given perpetuity to a life of sin. It was for the time being interdicted in mercy until they should be again restored to purity, and then they might freely eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. The paradise of God is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, so minutely described in the 21st of Revelation, and on the banks of the "river of God," which runs through the centre of the city, grows the tree of life. "Blessed are they who do his commandments," and so have right to the tree of life, by entering in through the gates into the city. It bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree shall be for the healing of the nations. The permission to eat of the tree of life was withdrawn through disobedience, which entailed the penalty of death, but the obedience of Christ, the second Adam, removes

the prohibition, and entirely alters our position. We are now entitled, in virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ, to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, "for as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, the same many are made righteous." Believing this we come into the knowledge of the truth, and so obtain the victory.

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write."

The angel or presiding minister is the responsible head of each Church; the apostles are so of all the churches collectively, and Christ is the head over all things to his Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. As the angel is to the church over which he presides, so is the king to the people over whom God hath made him the ruler, and as every father is to his children. Each in his place has his responsibilities, for which God will hold him accountable, and both are included in the blessings and in the judgments. The sin of the head is visited on the members, and again the sin of the members on the head. "He visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him." There are many instances of this in Scripture. Thus it was for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites, that long after his death the land was visited with famine; and for the sin of David, because contrary to the commandment of God he numbered Israel, a pestilence was sent on the people, and seventy thousand were slain. It has pleased God from the beginning of the world thus to constitute the social system, that the blessings and the cursings should descend to posterity, and on this principle it is that

the whole race is involved in the sin of our first parents, "for by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men." Upon the same principle do we become partakers of the benefits flowing from Christ, who is the second Adam, and so it is written, "for as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." We die through our connection with the first Adam; we live again through our connection with the second Adam, "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." It is thus an immutable law of the Most High to connect in one the whole fabric of human society, and to this great principle we are indebted for our relation to Christ, who came down from heaven to be the new head of our race. Our union with Christ is a reality, it is not as is usually supposed, formed by faith, for faith does not make that to be true which was not true before, it only realizes the truth of a thing already existing. Our union with Christ is a reality, as truly as our union with Adam is so, and by faith we discern it to be so, faith or believing being simply the persuasion of the mind regarding that which previously existed as a truth. What the Son of God has done, he has done for all mankind; as the curse of the law is universal, so also is redemption from that curse, for "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us," and to this end, that the blessing of Abraham might be ours, which blessing is the promise of the earth for an everlasting inheritance. Nevertheless all do not reach to the promised blessing, but only such as believe. To them who believe not, "he will swear in his wrath that they shall not enter into his rest," and their union with Christ will be

dissolved, as is clearly taught in the parable of the vine and the branches. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, but every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit." All are branches, but the fruitful only continue in permanence, the rest are cut off, and the connexion is for ever dissolved.

SMYRNA.

"Smyrna is a city of lesser Asia, on the east shore of the Mediterranean Sea, distant from Ephesus about 46 miles, delightfully situated, and convenient as a maritime port. Here a church was early planted, consisting, like most of the other churches, chiefly of the poorer sort (for as yet it was not deemed fashionable to be Christians), but the poverty of this church in particular is referred to, not by any means as a disqualification, but because, while poor in the goods of this world, they were rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom."

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich."

It is a remarkable coincidence that the only Church noted for its poverty receives unqualified praise, while the only one noted for its wealth, viz., Laodicea, receives no meed of praise; not that poverty is in itself any recommendation, but the riches of this world are not a favourable soil for the cultivation of true riches. "They that will be rich fall into a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition." This Church was poor in outward circumstances, "having nothing, yet possessing all things"

—rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. They were rich in his estimation, who judgeth, not as men judge, for men judge after the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

“ I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.”

With us the term Jew is a synonym of reproach, with the Lord it is a term so honourable that he will not suffer it to be applied but to those who really are the children of Abraham, and who do the works of Abraham, for he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God. They are not Jews who are of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcized. There were at this time many Jews who indeed professed to receive Jesus as the true Messiah, but who in works denied him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. All who work iniquity, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, belong to the synagogue of Satan. “ There were many unruly and vain talkers, especially they of the circumcision, who subverted whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.” Such probably were those to whom the Lord here refers ; he regarded their assumption of the name of Jew as blasphemy, while in works they denied him. But he is “ the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.” He is the God of the Hebrews, therefore should men speak respectfully, yea reverently, of a

people who have been, and will be again, the objects of his especial regard, "for the Lord hath chosen Jacob to himself and Israel for his peculiar treasure."

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

The fear of suffering is an inborn principle in man, as indeed in all creatures, and can only be overcome and subdued by the higher principles of hope and love; the lively expectation of an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and unfading, has enabled men to endure every form and degree of suffering. Perfect love casts out fear.

"Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison."

In all persecutions for righteousness sake the devil is the instigator, he stirs up the evil passions of men to follow out his suggestions, and for the quieting of their conscience, makes them think they do God service, even when imbruing their hands in the blood of the saints.

"That ye may be tried."

It is for this reason that the Lord permits Satan to afflict his saints. It is to them as the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold. It is for the trial of their faith, which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, that it may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. No persecution can come without permission from God, who will not

suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear, and after we have suffered a while, he will stablish, strengthen, and settle us, that after we have patiently endured, we may obtain the promise, may rest from our labours, and be infeoffed as "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." We are to count it all joy, therefore, when subjected to these trials, knowing that the trying of our faith worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

"And ye shall have tribulation ten days."

When this epistle was first sent to this poor and simple people, in what other sense would they be likely to understand these words but in its plain and literal meaning. If by days, years were intended, this would have appeared to them a long time of suffering, but when understood simply as days, they would rejoice that their trial would be of so short duration, and would thus be fortified, and not be taken at unawares, as if some strange and unexpected thing had happened to them. They would now be prepared to submit themselves to the rod of persecution, to be apprehended and thrown into prison, and knowing beforehand the time of their release, when they found it verified by the result, their confidence in the Lord would be strengthened, and thus the evil intended by Satan would be frustrated, and be made subservient to the glory of God.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

When death comes, the combat is over, and the prize is either lost or won—"he only that endureth

to the end shall be saved," he only that "holdeth fast the beginning of his confidence and the rejoicing of his hope firm unto the end, shall be made partakers of Christ," and inherit the crown of life. To be faithful unto death, is to preserve the faith of this truth unto the end, viz., that God is love. Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God, but he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love. It is to preserve until death the knowledge of the name of God, because the knowledge of his name is the foundation of our confidence. We confide in him because we know his name. We believe in his name because he hath given himself for us, as it is written, "hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." Thus the knowledge of the name or character of God lies at the foundation of all true religion, and this knowledge, preserved unto the end, is the victory to be obtained. We then reach the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death."

The first death is the fruit of sin in Adam, but the second death is the fruit or consequence of life rejected in Christ. It is occasioned by our rejection of Christ, the second Adam, by whom righteousness entered into the world, and life by righteousness, and so life passed upon all men, for as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, the many are made righteous. The offence of one man brought condemnation upon all men, and the obedience of one man brings deliverance from condemnation to all men ; for as truly as Christ became sin for us, so truly do we become the right-

eousness of God in him. These are established facts—together apart from our believing or not believing—but the condemnation to the second death arises from our not believing in him who thus delivers us from the first death, and the magnitude of the punishment reveals the magnitude of the sin of unbelief. This is the ground of the condemnation that light is come into the world, but men love the darkness, and so continue in it. “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life, and because ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” All who die in sin, rise, but only to meet the second death, which is the lake of fire. “They who hate me love death,” and so continue dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, and being thus found at the great day, are righteously adjudged to the second death; but he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death, and this is the victory that overcometh even our faith, for by faith our hearts are purified, and thus are we made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

“And to the Angel of the Church in Pergamos, write.”

“Pergamos was a city of pro-consular Asia, on the river Caicus, about forty miles north-west from Thyatira, and sixty-four miles north of Smyrna, and in a country very fertile of corn. The place was famed for a temple of Esculapius the god of physic, and more so for the famed library of two hundred thousand volumes collected by Attalus, one of its Kings.” Here, as in other parts of Asia, the Lord had his golden candlestick to be a container and diffuser of his own light. He is alone the true light

which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and the church exists for the purpose of manifesting or holding forth this light, and so to exhibit it that all might come within the sphere of its influence, to the glory and praise of God.

“These things saith he who hath the sharp sword with two edges.”

“Listen, O Isles, unto me, and hearken ye people, from far. The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me. (Isaiah, xlix. 1, 2.) His name is called “the word of God,” and the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. The sword is the symbol of judgment, and is not to be used against the righteous, but is for such as do not repent; therefore he saith, “repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.” This is the sword by which Antichrist shall be destroyed; no hand shall touch him, but he shall be consumed with the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming, with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. As by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth, so by the same word shall

the wicked perish, and the enemies of the Lord be as the fat of lambs, they shall consume, into smoke shall they consume away.

“I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is.”

Pergamos, where this church was placed, was the boasted seat of learning, but here it is declared to be the seat of Satan, the school of hell, where Satan presided, and inculcated the wisdom which is from beneath, which is earthly, and sensual, and devilish.

“And thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.”

“Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” To hold fast his name is to recognise him continually as *our Saviour*, it is to believe, without wavering, that he hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. There is in us a tendency to forget that we are purged from our old sins, and so to become blind, and unable to see afar off, i.e., unable to see the distant glory which we have in promise, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Faith in the forgiveness of sins is the eye-salve which, when applied to the eye-balls of the mind, the scales fall off, and then we see “glory, and honour, and immortality” looming in the distance, and account ourselves to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth. To hold fast the name of Christ, then, is to hold fast to the belief of our forgiveness through his blood, by which faith we have conscious peace with God; the dread of death is removed, and the hope of glory is formed within us. Every man who holds fast the name of Christ feels that he stands upon a sure foundation, a strong

rock from which he cannot be dislodged. Upon this rock he builds his church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This is the explanation of holding fast his name, and the explanation of the second part is simply the open avowal of the first, for with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Faith in Christ begets the hope of glory, and the hope of glory maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us, but an open avowal of such a faith will not fail to bring reproach.

“Even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.”

It is in a time of fiery persecution that they who are strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus become prominent. In this church there was a disciple honourably distinguished, one who was accounted worthy, not only to believe on Christ, but also to suffer death for his name. This was Antipas, whom the Lord is graciously pleased to designate by name as his faithful martyr, and is thus handed down with honour from generation to generation, “for the memory of the just is blessed, while the name of the wicked shall rot.” In the midst of an idolatrous city he had boldly declared that they be no gods that are made with hands, but that “this is the true God and eternal life,” even him who was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. Blessed are they whom the Lord shall account faithful, for they shall enter into the joy of their Lord; and having been found faithful over a

few things, will be made rulers over many things. In those days of bloody persecution, the Church at Pergamos stood firm in their reliance on Christ, and in open adherence to his faith, and are therefore commended.

“ But I have a few things against thee.”

The Lord is not like an indulgent parent who sees with partial eyes the faults of his children. He cannot look on evil, from whatever quarter it may arise, but with abhorrence. Its offensiveness is not lessened because it appears in his own disciples, but rather the contrary, for to whom much is given, of such will much be required. If Christ have a few things against us, he may long continue to bear with them, but in the end it comes to this that either they must be abandoned or we must be separated for ever from him. The Church which he will present to himself must be without spot, or blemish, or wrinkle, wholly unreprieveable in his sight, “all glorious within,” and of whom he can truly say, “thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee.” But now I have a few things against thee.

“ Because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.”

Balaam could not curse the people whom God had not cursed, but recommended Balak to seek to form intermarriages with the children of Israel. God had prohibited such connections, lest his people should be drawn into idolatry, and this advice became a stumblingblock and a cause of fall to many “who joined themselves to Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices

of the dead." Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions, and the plague brake in upon them, until Phinehas stood up and executed judgment, and so the plague was stayed. Balaam thus put a stumblingblock before the children of Israel. To hold the doctrine of Balaam was to teach as he taught. So there were certain in this Church who taught that it was lawful to eat things sacrificed to idols, for, said they, "an idol is nothing in the world, for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse." They considered not the injury they did to the weak brethren just emerging from idolatry, and who yet had conscience of the idol, and could not eat of meats placed before idols without defilement to their consciences, neither did they consider that by entering into the idol's temple and eating of the sacrifices, they were confirming the idolaters in their idolatry, and thus became a stumblingblock to the weak, and to those who otherwise might have received the truth. In thus acting, they sinned against their brethren, wounding their weak consciences, by seducing them to eat those things of which their conscience disapproved, and thereby endangering their salvation, "for thus might the weak brother perish for whom Christ died." They also taught the lawfulness of connections prohibited by the divine law. The Apostle reproves the Church at Corinth for this sin. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that a man should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."

"So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate."

“Those who held this doctrine included with it the sins of which the Balaamites were guilty, and added to it by licentious vices, reckoning adultery, and the use of meats offered to idols, as things which were innocent ; and they further taught doctrine, the direct tendency of which was to ascribe to God the origin of evil ; they held also a multitude of fables concerning the generation of angels, and the creation of the world by subordinate powers. These pernicious errors spread considerably through the Churches of Asia for a time. At Ephesus they were detested, but at Pergamos and Thyatira they were sinfully tolerated by the Christians.” “These were sensual, having not the spirit,” yet they mingle with those who had the spirit, “and sported themselves with their own deceivings,” while they feast with you—spots they are, and blemishes. These backsliders from the truth, if they could not be reclaimed, must be expelled, otherwise all would soon become corrupted by their pernicious heresies, for “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened, for even Christ our passover was sacrificed for us ; therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”


“Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”

The command to repent is from the Son of God, to whom all judgment is committed ; to him all flesh are responsible, and before his judgment seat all must appear to give account for the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil. Repent, open your eyes, and see the

magnitude of the evil, abhor it, and put it away, or else I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth, i.e., I will speak the word of judgment, and it shall come on them suddenly, and they shall be cut off, and that without remedy. They shall die in their sins, and as death leaves them, so will judgment find them. When the word of judgment is once pronounced, it is irrevocable. "So I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

The hidden manna refers to the future sustenance of the saints of God in their glorified bodies, and not to the present sustenance of their souls by Christ. It is a future good, held out in promise to him that overcometh, for to them hath he said, "Ye shall eat and drink with me at my table in my kingdom." The hidden manna is the future nourishment of the glorified body. The manna of which Israel did eat in the wilderness was the corn of heaven, for "man did eat angels food." The hidden manna must be something of the same nature, but only for such as have passed into immortality. It is good in reserve for those who have obtained the victory which is by faith, but as it does not yet appear what we shall be, so neither does it yet fully appear what that food is to be which will form our nourishment, for which reason it may possibly be termed the hidden manna. The giving of the white stone has reference to the ancient custom of pronouncing acquittal in the courts of judicature, and also as given to conquerors at the



Grecian games. In the day of judgment, there will be an open acquittal of the righteous, for the Lord will say unto them, "well done, good and faithful servants, ye have been faithful over a few things, I will make you rulers over many things." They who unashamed confessed him before men, he will confess and publicly acknowledge before his Father, and before his holy angels, and being thus acquitted and acknowledged, a new name of dignity will be conferred on them, which for all wise reasons shall be known only to its possessor, having reference no doubt to the future of glory into which they have entered, just as when God changed the name of Abram into Abraham, because "a father of many nations have I made thee," and as when he said to Jacob, "thy name shall be called Israel, for as a prince with God thou hast prevailed," so will each new name, written on the white stone, given to all his saints, have reference to future appointments of dignity and honour in Messiah's kingdom, and although it will rest with the individual saint as his secret, yet may in after ages become apparent in the various distinguished positions assigned to his servants in the progressive increase of his kingdom and glory, "for of the increase of his kingdom and dominion there shall be no end—upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and for ever."

"And unto the Angel of the Church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto fine brass."

"Thyatira was then a very considerable city of lesser Asia, about 26 miles north of Sardis, and 56 miles

north-east of Smyrna, but now either in ruins, or supposed by some to be the same with Akherson, with a population of 4000 or 5000, situated in a good soil, and a salubrious climate, but amongst multitudes of ancient ruins ;” yet there, once existed a church precious in the eyes of the Lord, and to whom he awarded praise, mingled with grave censure and solemn admonitions, warnings, and encouragements. “ These things, saith the Son of God,” of him it is thus written, “ I will make him my first-born higher than the kings of the earth,” he is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. In the eternal purpose he was the son of God, just as he was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world ; but as the latter was really accomplished at his death, so the former only became actually realized at his birth—then he became the Son of God, and so it is written, “ thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” If there was a day in which he was begotten, then before that day he was begotten only in the purpose of him who doeth all things after the counsel of his own will. In his weakness he was the Son of God, but at his resurrection he was declared to be the Son of God with power. We are the sons of God by the connecting link of his humanity. If Christ be our brother, then God is our Father, but Christ alone stands in the true relationship of Son, and thus holds, even as man, a pre-eminent dignity far above every creature, Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ? and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son ? To him then alone does the high prerogative belong, “ the only begotten Son of

God," begotten of the Father according to the previous intimation by the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Of this holy being who was born of a woman, it is declared that "his goings forth were of old even from everlasting;" "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made," who yet, when the fulness of time was come, humbled himself to become an infant of days, and the begotten of God is the Son of the highest, and becomes by inheritance the heir of God, with whom we, through union with him, become joint heirs. Angels are sons of God by creation, great in dignity, and in power, and might, of whom it is written that when he laid the foundations of the earth, "the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy." The redeemed among men are the sons of God in a still higher degree through their union with Christ, but to himself alone does the title Son of God in its first and highest sense belong, and it is next to the name Jehovah, the highest name in the universe. All the angels of God do worship him, and render to him the homage which is due only to God, because although he has added a new nature to his own pre-existent divine nature, he has not ceased to be, neither indeed can cease to be "over all God blessed for ever." These things saith the Son of God.

"Who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire,
and his feet like unto fine brass."

As the fire penetrateth all bodies, so are the deep recesses of all hearts penetrable to the eyes of him

with whom we have to do. He appears in the midst of the throne "with seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart. Yet vain man will say "how doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most high." Know, O ye brutish among the people, and ye fools, when will ye be wise, "he that formed the eye, shall he not see, and he that planted the ear, shall not he hear." He that could contrive the wonderful mechanism of the eye and ear, and adapt them so well to their assigned purposes, shall not he, the maker, be capable of comprehending the being whom he has formed, and whom he sustains; he is the searcher of the reins, and the trier of the hearts of the children of men. And as his eyes like a flame of fire penetrate all things, so his feet like burnished brass tread down all evil, without being defiled therewith. "Thou hast trodden down all them that do err from thy statutes, for their deceit is falsehood." (Ps. cxix. 118).

"I know thy works, and love, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first."

"The eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." He does not forget their work and labour of love, which they have shown toward his name in ministering to his saints.

"Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee."

Sin is like the letting out of water which cannot be gathered up again ; a little evil indulged soon spreads like the leprosy, until it covers the whole body—a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump—evil is generic, and needs to be suppressed in the bud. The few things would gender into many things if not eradicated ; but the Lord will have his people to be holy and without blame before him in love ; he will bear with evil for a time, but not for ever, for no uncleanness shall stand before him ; those whom he chooses to dwell in his courts and to appear before his throne must be without fault.


“ Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.”

It is the angel of the church who is addressed, and he is guilty in this matter, yet the whole church is involved in his guilt, and is included in the censure passed on him. He sat in the chair of authority, and suffered pernicious doctrines to be taught, unrebuked, in the church over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer. It was a female who inculcated these heretical doctrines, and her name was Jezebel ; she assumed the prophetic garb, for she called herself a prophetess ; she must have spoken in the power, i.e., by the direction of a spirit who resided in her, otherwise in the church her sex would have precluded her from speaking, as it was now an established order that “the women should keep silence in the churches ;” but when they spoke in demonstration of the spirit, or prayed in the spirit, it was no more themselves but the spirit who was in them, and this explains

the apparent contradiction in the apostolic order, at one time commanding silence in the churches to women, and at another instructing them when praying or prophecying to have their head covered. Jezebel was permitted to speak when the spiritual power rested upon her, and this power was of the devil, although unknown to the church. It appears that the appointed test for the discernment of spirits had been omitted to be put in exercise, otherwise the church might have been spared this rebuke, as well as the evil consequences which flowed from such teaching. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." The power (supernatural) in this woman, assumed to be, but was not of God, and if tested by the angel, must have been shown to be of the enemy, for no man, speaking in power, can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost. By this test were the spirits to be tried, and if Jezebel had been so tried, she must have been detected as being the vehicle of an unclean spirit. Her oracular deliverances were from the father of lies ; by him she was possessed, and not by the spirit of God, and the words spoken tended to seduce the servants of Christ to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. In those days, prophecy in all the churches was universal, and made up a considerable portion of the edification received in coming together to break bread, which they did on the first day of the week, which was called the Lord's Day. Prophecy consisted of communications to each other, direct from the spirit of God ; it was teaching in the power, i.e., under direct inspiration, and was intended for edification, for exhortation, and comfort. This great gift

the apostle exhorts them to seek after more than the gift of tongues, which latter gift was of no benefit to any but themselves, except followed by interpretation; therefore while he commands them "not to forbid speaking with tongues, they were to covet to prophecy." It was a spiritual gift to be greatly desired and prayed for, and was bestowed on very many at their stated assemblies; two or three might speak alternately, and so might thus prophecy, one by one, that all might learn, and all might be comforted, and if anything was suddenly revealed to one sitting by, the first was to be silent, that thus there might be no confusion, for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. That women partook of the gift of prophecy appears from many parts of Scripture, thus the four daughters of Philip, the deacon and evangelist, did prophecy, and so it is written, "I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy." The custom of "women praying in the power, and also prophesying" in all the assemblies of the churches, was common in the first and purest age of the church, but in every church there was a presiding guardian or angel, whose commission was to watch over and preserve in all purity those over whom he was set, and for that purpose it was imperative on him to guard against the entrance of spirits of devils, assuming to be the spirit of God, for Satan can, and does, when it suits his purpose, transform himself into an angel of light, that he may "with good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." By the assumption of godly and flattering words, those erroneous and pernicious doctrines, so subversive of true godliness, were instilled into the minds of the simple people. The false prophets come in sheep's clothing, and outwardly are

undistinguishable from the sheep, but by their fruits they shall be known. Satan can speak godly words for the purpose of perversion, but he cannot do godly works, for these are utterly repugnant to his nature, neither will he acknowledge the Son of Man to be Lord, for that would be to acknowledge his own defeat and overthrow, and also to admit that principalities and powers are spoiled, and captivity himself made captive. Thus had the prince of darkness found an open door for the communication of evil doctrines, and that through the unwatchfulness of him whom God had set as watchman and guardian, therefore he was to be blamed, because he had suffered that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce his servants. There appears no sufficient reason why the real name of the great offender should not be given, as it was an established law in the churches "that those who sin should be rebuked before all, that others also might fear." It appears, on the contrary, necessary that the name of one should be distinctly specified, who was possessed, not by the Spirit of God, but by a lying spirit, who taught false doctrines by her mouth. The Holy Ghost, if he ever dwelt in this woman, had now withdrawn from her, as he did from Saul, and she became the vessel of another spirit, by whom she was supernaturally endowed to sow the poisonous weeds of false doctrine so offensive to the Lord; and there seems no good grounds why she should be spoken of under an ideal or figurative name, leaving doubts to exist among the brethren as to who the offending one really was. It was necessary that she should be distinctly pointed out for a warning to herself, but more especially to others, who were not as yet aware to whose words they were listening. In her utterances there would be all the appearance and fervour of such as spake by the



Spirit of God ; the more closely the imitation of manner could be kept up, the more likely it would be to effect the desired purpose. There would be many words of truth, with sprinklings of error intermixed, these sprinklings gradually increasing, until by degrees the error would predominate, and in the end, doctrines wholly repugnant to the truth of the gospel, be unblushingly taught. The course of error is stealthy and gradual, and like the leaven hid in the meal, continues its leavening process until the whole is leavened.

“ And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.”

This woman had not newly commenced her evil career of false teaching, but must have been a considerable time going on with her pernicious prophesying, and all the while it may be, prospering in her worldly affairs, increasing with goods, and having need of nothing ; not at all understanding, or having any suspicions that she was existing upon sufferance, that an hour was at hand when “ vengeance would not suffer her longer to live,” but would take her away, and pluck her out of the land of the living. The sword of judgment was suspended over her—even that two-edged sword which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, and which does far more terrible execution than any sword held by human hands. The Lord is long-suffering ; but there are limits to his forbearance. Take as an illustration the parable of the fig tree, for which, while he intercedes that it might not be cut down, he limits a time. If this year when I shall dig about it and dung it, it bear fruit, well, if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. God is angry with the wicked—

(and all that forget God are wicked) every day ; if he turn not, he will whet his sword, he will bend his bow, and make it ready, he will prepare for him the instruments of death. A certain space is afforded, but when the time expires, then destruction shall certainly come, and that without remedy. They shall be brought into desolation as in a moment, and be utterly consumed with terrors. "Who knoweth the power of thine anger, even as a man feareth, so is thy wrath." To fall into the hands of wicked men whose tender mercies are cruel, is perilous, but to fall into the hands of an incensed God whose power is equal to his displeasure, must be the extreme of misery. Thus Jezebel was on her trial, and she knew it not. "I gave her space to repent, and she repented not."

"Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."

The bed into which the Lord would cast this woman might probably refer to judgments similar to those which were denounced on Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. For all his wickedness and sin he was cast into a bed, and into great sicknesses and pains, until after two years of suffering, his bowels fell out, and he died. Many were weak and sickly in the Corinthian Church, and many slept, because they had provoked the Lord to anger ; so shall the false prophetess be visited, and all those who had imbibed her pernicious doctrine. The Lord will cast her into a bed of languishing, and her guilty followers into great tribulation. Temporal inflictions indeed, but the precursors and harbingers of judgments to come, which would be wholly unmingled with leniency—judgments without mercy and without end.

“And I will kill her children with death.”

Her offspring also should be cut off, like the offspring of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who taught Israel to sin. The Lord visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them who hate him, while he shows mercy to thousands of them who love him and keep his commandments.

“And all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and the heart.”

The punishments inflicted on the Israelites in the wilderness “happened to them for ensamples, and were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come,” so the judgements inflicted on the false prophetess and her disciples, and her children, would become beacons to warn this church against listening in all time coming to such as would draw them away from the simplicity and the purity that is in Christ, and would remind them that his eyes were continually upon them, for good to them who follow after good, and for evil to them who follow after evil.


“And I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”

With the Lord is no respect of persons, “he regardeth not the persons of men,” his ways are equal, and with impartiality will he deal out even-handed justice unto all men; every one by himself will be brought into judgment, and every man shall answer for himself to God; and yet the rebellious heart refuses to submit itself. Who is Lord over us? is still the language of every man’s heart who cannot admit the existence of a right in God to

control and direct or bring him into judgment. Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us? is still the imperious question of the proud heart who cannot endure the thought of a superior. We are reluctant to believe that there is any being to whom we are responsible; the heart is stout against God, and is in determined hostility to him. Happy those are who, by acquainting themselves with God, have been led to submit themselves cheerfully to him, and to make their own wills bend to his, for his commandments are not grievous, and are life everlasting to all who obey them.

“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden but that which ye have already. Hold fast till I come.”

I will put upon you none other burden; it is a light burden which Christ puts upon his people, the lightest of all burdens, even “love.” All his commandments are embraced in this one commandment, “for love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law,” and love to man flows out of love to God, for “every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.” Love to God springs from the knowledge of God, and God is known, when Christ is discerned to be God. When we see the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, then we understand that God is love, and so love him who first loved us. This is the only burden. Keep in memory the knowledge that God is love, hold that fast until he come, for every Christian grace will be consequent upon it. It was



“to as many as had not this doctrine.” to whom our Lord here speaks. False doctrines he abhors, and hath said “If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.” When men embrace false doctrines, their minds have previously undergone a preparation, by secret estrangement from God. He who closely walks with God is preserved from the doctrines which causeth to err. There is an intimate connexion between the understanding and the heart; when the affections are heavenward, the understanding is clear, “if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light, but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness, and if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.” It was to them also who had not known the depths of Satan, “as they speak,” not as he speaks, for to him the depths even of Satan are clearly penetrable, as he knows what is in man, so he knows also what is in the tempter of man, he understands all his dark thoughts and proceedings, and for this purpose he was himself manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. Such depths as they are, it is not necessary that his people should know them. It is good indeed not to be ignorant of his devices. It is good to be at all times clothed with the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, but in other respects, the less acquaintance we have with him the better, he is not to be to us a subject for study. It is sufficient to know that he exists, going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it for the purpose of mischief and injury to our race, and that as a roaring lion so he goeth about continually seeking whom he may devour; but our strength and sufficiency is not in watching his movements, but in God, who will not suffer us to be

tempted above that which we are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, make a way for us to escape: The depths of Satan was an expression in frequent use, a sort of proverb among them which he disliked—prying into hidden things—which could be attended with no profit to their souls; he would therefore have them to be simple concerning evil, and not to have personal acquaintance with what they called the depths of Satan, neither to have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them.

“And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.”

While we live by faith, we overcome; when this shield is laid aside we are overcome. It is like the contest of Israel with the Amalekites; Israel prevailed when the arms of Moses were upheld, and the enemy prevailed when his arms were down. When faith is in exercise, we prevail against the enemy, but when we walk by sight, the enemy prevails against us. The just live by their faith, and indeed in proportion to their faith do they live in the sight of God; but they who live in pleasure, i.e., walk after the flesh, are dead while they live, and they who, having escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, do again become entangled therein and are overcome, are twice dead, dead previous to their faith upon the Son of God, and dead the second time through their ceasing to believe on him. It is by hearing the voice of the Son of God that we come into life, and that life is perpetuated by continuing to hear his voice. He who thus continueth unto the end shall be saved, he shall

then rest, and his union with Christ be pronounced indissoluble and eternal, but until then the issue is doubtful so far as we are concerned. When and while we pray, we live, and in living, we live to him who loved us, and gave himself for us, and thus we glorify God in our body and in our spirits, which are God's. "They who honour me I will honour," saith the Lord, and "to such as overcome and keep my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations."

"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father."

When the mighty God the Lord shall come and call the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, then will he execute vengeance on them that know him not, and his assessors in the judgment will be his saints. The Lord my God will come, and all his saints with him, and in conjunction with them he shall rule the nations with a rod of iron. "When transgressors have come to the full," a man of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up and head the people, who shall make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is King of kings and Lord of lords, and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. The allusion is to the second Psalm, "even as I received of my Father." "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give to thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Thus he received this power from

his Father, and communicates the same to his saints, for he is the head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

“ And I will give him the morning star.”

Christ is himself the bright and the morning star, and to give to him that overcometh the morning star, is to give himself, in whom resides all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and as the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid, so when the work of redemption is completed, and the new heavens and new earth are inaugurated, a new race of morning stars and sons of God, of even higher standing, shall combine in songs of praise and unceasing hallelujahs to him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. The star has come out of Jacob, who is to be ruler of Israel hereafter; he is the star of brightest lustre, the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and with whatever brilliancy the saints of God shall hereafter shine as stars in the heavenly firmament, all their brightness and all their splendour will ever be derived from him whose light is no borrowed light, but underived and self-existing, even as his goings forth have been of old from everlasting.

CHAPTER III.

1. And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write : These things saith he that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars ; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die ; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments ; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

7. And to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia, write : These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth.

8. I know thy works ; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it : for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie ; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11. Behold, I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out ; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God ; and I will write upon him my new name.

13. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14. And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, write : These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot ; I would thou wert cold or hot.

16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked :

18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous therefore, and repent.

20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

“ And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write.”

“ Sardis, an ancient city of lesser Asia, at the foot of Mount Tmolus, supposed to have been built soon after the destruction of Troy, i.e., about A.M. 3100. In the time of Cyrus, it was the capital of Lydia or Jud, and was wealthy and populous. It was taken by Cyrus and plundered, but it continued a place of considerable consequence, but was eventually ruined by an earthquake in the time of our Saviour. By the Emperor Tiberias' orders, it was rebuilt, but never recovered its ancient splendour. A Christian Church was early planted there, but the vigour of inward piety quickly decayed. There still remain some vestiges of Christianity but since the place fell into the hands of the Saracens and Turks it has gradually diminished, and nothing now remains but a tolerable inn, some cottages for shepherds, and heaps of old ruins.” Such is the present condition of a place where once existed a golden candlestick, watched over by Christ, with its angel held in his right hand, but the gold soon became dim, and the most fine gold changed.

“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”

This is the condition of the leper, who is dead while he lives. The life blood indeed still slowly and sluggishly permeates through the vital parts, sufficient to keep soul and body together, but little more, and so it was spiritually with the Church of Sardis, numbered among the living, and yet virtually dead, having a name among the churches as one of the candlesticks of gold, but the glory was departed, for the glory of a church is in the possession of the truth, for the church is the pillar and ground of the truth.

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.”

The first retrograding step is unwatchfulness. If there is one duty more than another which our Lord urged upon his disciples, it was the duty of watchfulness. “What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch,” and the apostle exhorts to “praying always with all prayer and supplication, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” Prayer will fall off without watching, hence the urgent necessity for the removal of every impediment and hindrance. Thus we are to lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, that we may run with patience the race set before us. Watchfulness is the first step to spiritual recovery; watching unto prayer we return unto the Lord, who will heal us and bind up our spiritual wounds. “After two days he will revive us; in the third he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.” (Hos. vi. 22.) There is a great analogy between the natural and spiritual, or divine life, hence the language

of our Lord,—“the things which remain and which are ready to die.” As in the natural, so in the spiritual, life gradually ebbs away, and death ensues ; recovery from spiritual death is as difficult as recovery from natural death, and so the Apostle warns us of the danger of apostacy, on the ground that it is impossible to renew men again unto repentance. But this church had not yet declined to an irrecoverable state, although fast progressing in that direction, and therefore while there was any life, they were earnestly exhorted to make the most of it.

“Remember therefore how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast, and repent.”

The exhortation is to return to the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, to the original truths by which their affections were set on Christ, to that gospel which at the first was mighty through God in transforming them from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The Apostle found it necessary long before this to recall to the Corinthian Church the groundwork of their faith, and thus adressed them : “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures,” by which resurrection they were freed from sin, for he adds, “if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins,” but as Christ is raised, ye are not in your sins, ye are made free from sin. The curse of the law is removed from you, that

the blessing of Abraham might come upon you ; and the blessing of Abraham is the promise of eternal life, the promise of eternal inheritance in the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. This therefore is that saving grace, that manifestation of the kindness and love of God our Saviour, which had appeared to them, which they had heard, and which they had received, and which had brought forth fruit since the day they heard it, and knew the grace of God in truth. It is by grace we are saved—not of works—but we must continue in the grace of God, we must continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and not be moved away from the hope of the gospel, i.e., from the hope which is laid up for us in heaven, to be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ ; the hope of an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, a hope begotten in us simply by believing the promise of a faithful God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. All this the Church of Sardis had allowed to pass out of mind or nearly so, and had in consequence returned again to the beggarly elements of the world, to seek their happiness in earthly things, and had forgotten God their Saviour ; they were sinking fast into the vortex, and the Lord was about to disinherit them, and to swear in his wrath that “ they should not enter into his rest.” But our God who is rich in mercy, is slow to adopt this final step, and would rather that they should be renewed unto repentance, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to eternal life. “ Remember therefore ! ” Let memory be put into exercise to recall those truths, which at the first purified your hearts, and will purify them again. Remember the “ word of God,”—and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you—which effectually worketh in all them who

believe, it is the precious seed, which, when it falls into honest hearts, invariably brings forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God. This was what they were to remember, even his promise of eternal life, which promise believed, never fails to endear him, to inspire confidence in him, and this confidence is the state of reconciliation wherein the natural enmity is subdued and the heart's rebellion destroyed. This therefore they were to remember, and remembering, to hold fast, and holding fast, to be turned again to the fountain of living waters which they had forsaken.

“If therefore thou shall not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

The original cause of their drawing back from God was their neglect of this first and primary duty, which is imposed on every Christian, i.e., on every man who has begun to run the Christian race, who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, viz., watchfulness. Watchfulness by day and by night, watching unto prayer, watching and praying always “that we may be counted worthy to escape all those things which come to pass upon the world, and to stand before the Son of Man.” Lest his disciples should think that his words applied to the present only, our Lord emphatically adds, “what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.” And again, “watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.” No man can be saved who does not watch, because the truth which quickens, and keeps alive the soul, will not remain without watchfulness. There is no commodity upon earth so precious as truth, “therefore buy the truth and sell it not;” it is to be bought “with-

out money, and without price," and when possessed, it is precious, but it can only be kept, and maintained by faith ; prayer is the element in which faith lives, and by watchfulness, prayer is maintained and continued. It is the enemy's object to make us cease from prayer, and so to render dim the things which are unseen and eternal, and to magnify into importance the things which are seen and temporal. No man who neglects prayer can grow in grace but must go back, and "if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

The Lord discriminates between those who serve him and those who serve him not, and he will spare the former as a man spareth his son who serveth him. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and a book of remembrance is written before him for them that fear him and that call upon his name. (Malachi iii. 16.) The large proportion of the members of the Church of Sardis having ceased to watch and to pray, had ceased to live unto God, and so their garments were defiled ; but a few there were whose garments were still white and unspotted by the flesh, and these were marked for companionship with him. The garment is "the righteousness of Christ," which, as a glorious robe, is unto all and upon all ; we are "the righteousness of God in him, even as he was made sin for us." There was imputation of the sin of the many to the one, and now there is the imputation of the righteousness of the one to the many, and as truly as one died for all, and so became a sin offering for all, so truly

is the righteousness of God imputed to all, irrespective of believing, being a great truth of itself, and standing upon its own foundation. What then has faith to do with it? By faith we understand it to be so, and so have peace with God, being "complete in him who is the head of all principality and power." While we continue in the faith of our completeness in Christ, while we consciously are arrayed inwardly in this purest robe, our soul is preserved pure, but when this consciousness departs from us, through unbelief, caused by neglect of prayer and watchfulness, evil finds admittance. The conscience which was kept clear while discerning him as "the Lord our righteousness," becomes clouded and dark when this truth evanishes and ceases to be truth in our eyes; then the garment is defiled, and they who had not defiled their robes were they who had day by day continued to walk in that light which they had embraced at first, and which was simply this, that "Christ was made of God unto them righteousness." The promise to those who had not defiled their garments was, that "they should walk with him in white," i.e., that the marriage garment would continue to be theirs in perpetuity, and their union with Christ never be dissolved; at present, although we are accepted in the beloved, and covered with his robe of righteousness, still through unbelief our union with him may be dissolved, and all the benefits of redemption lost. We are to him what the branches are to the vine, "every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, but every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." All the branches while in the vine belong to it, but when a branch is cut off, the connection is gone, and all the benefits derived from the connection are lost, so thus separated from Christ "redemption ceaseth

for ever." Through unbelief is the connection dissolved, but through faith we stand, through faith we receive divine nourishment and bring forth fruit unto God. When the time of probation is ended, we become "stablished, strengthened, settled," one in Christ, and one with Christ for ever, but those who defile their garments will have their names expunged from the book of life, and will not be found there on the great day when the books are opened, and another book, which is called the book of life.

"And to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia, write."

"Philadelphia was a city of Lydia, at the north foot of Mount Tmolus, and was so called, either from Attalus Philadelphus, who greatly adorned, if he did not build it, or because there the Asian Greeks held their kind and brotherly feast; it stood about twenty-four miles east from Sardis, and seventy-two miles from Smyrna, and here a Christian Church was very early planted. The Epistle is addressed, as are all the others, to the presiding minister, here denominated angel, for as angels are ministering spirits, so does the presiding elder minister to his flock, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and he is the angel of the universal church."

"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth."

Jesus is the holy one of God—holy, harmless, and undefiled—separate from sinners, and made higher

than the heavens. In the 86th Psalm he says : “ preserve my soul, for I am holy ; O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.” And the Angel Gabriel, when speaking to Mary, said, “ that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” As he is holy, so is he true ; he is the truth or substance of all the shadows that were under the law ; he is the impersonation, the embodiment of truth, when he speaketh a truth, he speaketh of his own, for he “ is the way, the truth, and the life.”

“ He that hath the key of David.”

To have the key of David, is to sit on David's throne. David foresaw that Christ would sit on his throne, for “ being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne ; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. (Acts ii. 21.) David understood that Christ would sit in permanence on his throne, and also that in order to this he must be raised from the dead. He that hath the key of David is David's successor in the kingdom—to him the kingdom belongs—and so it is written, “ the kingdom shall be the Lord's,” and as Gabriel spake to Mary, “ the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.” The government shall be on his shoulders, and to him the right of admission and exclusion belongs, he opens, and none can shut, and shuts and none can open. Blessed are they who have an abundant entrance administered to them into his everlasting kingdom. Christ is Jehovah's anointed King—to “ this end was he born ”—his

kingdom is not now of this world, but the time is at hand when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.

“Behold I have set before thee an open door.”

Now the door is open, but the time cometh when “the master of the house will rise up and shut too the door, and then there will be no entrance.” The foolish virgins will come after the door is shut, but he from within shall say unto them, “I know you not.” So will he say to all who have not embraced the accepted time, the day of salvation.

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

The word of his patience is the word of the promise held fast, unmoved amid trials and temptations. “Holding fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, but in patience possessing our souls, believing that he is faithful who hath promised. The word of the covenant which God made to a thousand generations, even the promise of life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord—this word believed and held fast, is indeed the word of his patience, which they who keep shall themselves be kept from (or in) the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. This hour of temptation will take place in the reign of the personal Antichrist, whose coming shall be after the working of Satan,

with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. This is the hour of temptation from which they shall be kept, and into which they shall not fall who have kept the word of his patience.

“Behold I come quickly.”

The Lord would have it impressed on the minds of his disciples that “he will see them again,” that they shall see his face, and that the time is near. He would have them regard this, not as an event distant, but near. He would have the feeling of expectancy to be always in us. The scoffer says, where is the promise of his coming? and the unfaithful servant, my Lord delayeth his coming! The virgins all slumber and sleep because he seems to tarry, but the midnight cry will soon be heard, “Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him.” All things combine to hasten on that great and glorious consummation, the coming of the Lord, and with his coming, the resurrection of the just, and the commencement of an era which shall have no termination. Many circumstances are now occurring to indicate its near proximity, although “of that day and hour knoweth no man.” The times of the Gentiles are nearly run out; they have already continued as long as did the times of Israel and Judah, and they were the natural branches. The coming of the Lord is to take place at the expiry of the times of the Gentiles, for with Israel’s restoration he comes to reign; to be their recognized king, and their manifested God, “to rule over the house of Jacob for ever.” Blessed are all they who wait for his coming, who look forward

to it as their brightest prospect, as the crowning of their highest expectations, their joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

The Apostle Paul looked for a crown—“henceforth,” said he, “there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day,” and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing. It is a crown of glory which fadeth not away, “an incorruptible crown,” and to be obtained by holding that fast which we have. The burden which the Lord hath put upon us is “love,” love, not springing out of the ungenial soil of our own hearts, but flowing into us by the belief of his love. It is to hold fast that truth which originated confidence in God, and that hope which is begotten in us by the faith of his promise, as it is written, “this is the promise that is promised us, even eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, *and* I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.”

Pillars are the props and supports of the building, and when used metaphorically, represent the importance of the position to be occupied by his Saints. Thus Paul speaks of James and Cephas (or Peter) as being pillars in the Church which was at Jerusalem.

To be named a pillar in the temple of God indicates the high and honourable place which they shall hold who have overcome, for the promise is to *all* who have obtained the victory of faith. "Him I will make a pillar in the temple of my God." The Lord is in his holy temple, it is the place of his sacred habitation, his house wherein are many mansions, and his city which hath foundations, whereof he is the builder and the maker; it is called the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the paradise which John saw in vision, and up into which Paul was caught; situated in the third heavens, but in due time to descend, "to come down out of heaven from my God." The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God, a city resplendently glorious, into which the pure in heart alone shall have access. Four times in this one verse does the Lord speak of his Father in the relation of "my God." In all the Psalms this relation is sustained. Thus in the 22nd Psalm, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." In the 63rd Psalm—"O Lord, thou art my God, early will I seek thee," and in many other Psalms, which all refer exclusively to Christ. At his resurrection also to Mary Magdalene—I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. He glories in the new relation, which by his union with our nature he now sustains. He loves to be called Jesus of Nazareth, and "the Son of Man," and as man he is a worshipper of God, yea, and the highest worshipper, being ordained "an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." It is and ever will be a great mystery—God manifest in the flesh, worshipped as God, counting it no robbery to be equal with God; and yet as man the worshipper of God, not

for a limited period, but to continue so for ever, ever existing in two natures, in one the worshipper, and in the other the worshipped. It is promised to him that overcomes, that he shall have written upon him the name of God and the new name of Christ. The impress both of the Father and the Son will indelibly rest on the brow of the man who overcomes, and he will be exalted to the first and highest order of created intelligences, heirship of God, and joint-heirship with Christ. The eye hath not seen nor the ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. The name of the city, new Jerusalem, is also to be written on the man who overcomes, indicative of his right to enter and reside in that sacred abode, where there is fulness of joy and where there are pleasures for evermore. He on whom the name of the city is inscribed shall reside there for ever, even all who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

“And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, write.”

“There were at least six cities of this name, but the Scripture only mentions that of Phrygia, on the river Lycus, near Colossæ. It was anciently called Jupiter's city and the Rhoas, but Seleucus, or perhaps Antiochus, the Syro-Grecian king, rebuilt it, and called it Laodicea, after his wife. Though Paul never preached here, yet a Christian Church was early planted in this place. They were in the same danger from false preachers as the Colossians, and so Paul orders that his Epistle to the Colossians be read also to them. He also mentions a letter from Laodicea, but whether it was the Epistle to Timothy or that to

the Ephesians, which the Laodiceans had had the perusal of, or whether it was some letter the Laodiceans had sent him, we know not. There is still extant a letter, pretended to be that of Paul to the Laodicean Church, but it is agreed to be spurious; and Timotheous, a priest of Constantinople, says it was forged by the Manichees, about A.D. 96. The Christians of Laodicea were become extremely ignorant, proud, self-conceited, and careless about eternal things. The Lord therefore directed John to write them an epistle for their conviction and amendment. At present Laodicea is not only unchurched, but is a mere desert, with some ruins, scarce sufficient to mark that such a city ever was in the place, and is called by the Turks, Eskhissar."

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness."

In Christ Jesus all the promises of God are yea, and in him amen; they centre in him, are obtained by him, and flow through him. Promises to men apart from Christ are impossible, for God heareth not sinners, and all have sinned, and come short of his glory. As no man can worship God, or approach at all to God, but through Christ, so no man can receive promises but only through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen. Christ has come forth from the bosom of the Father to reveal his glory. "The faithful and true witness," faithful to him that appointed him, even as Moses was faithful in all his house.

"The beginning of the creation of God."

The new creation begins with the resurrection of Christ; all the original creation has been marred by sin, and has to be destroyed; the first

heaven and the first earth must pass away. As the world that was before the flood, being overflowed with water, perished, so the heavens and the earth which now are, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men; but we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. This is the new creation of which the beginning and the first fruits is Christ, in which sense alone he is the beginning of the creation of God, the first-born of every creature, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence; but he is at the sametime the creator, for "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." All things were by him created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; they were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Although he is here called the beginning of the creation of God, cannot refer to his original existence, for he who counted it no robbery to be equal with God could have had no commencement any more than God, "for his goings forth have been of old, even from everlasting." It is of the new order of things about to be introduced, that Christ is the beginning and the forerunner. As it is written, "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth," then "the glory of the Lord shall endure for ever, the Lord shall rejoice in his works." (Psalm civ. 31.) This creation (proper) has not yet come into existence, excepting in the person of Christ only, but yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and then, "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth," and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind, but the

~~new~~ heavens and the new earth which I will make shall ~~remain~~ before me saith the Lord. This is "the kingdom which cannot be moved," but which "shall stand for ever." All that went before shall be obliterated, and become as though it had not been; ~~not~~ to be remembered but as the scaffolding which is ~~taken~~ down when the building is completed. The present are but the preliminary steps which in the wisdom of God were necessary to give eternal stability to the new creation, of which the beginning, the first man, is the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. It was proper that this new and enduring creation should be inaugurated by him, without whom there could have been no emancipation from death. The sentence on Adam and his posterity must have been perpetual, and could not have been repealed, but the Captain of our salvation has obtained the victory over death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and in his own resurrection exhibits the first trophy of his victory, and of the new and permanent creation, being the first fruits of them that slept, and the first fruits of the coming harvest of glory.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot."

This Church was contented in her lukewarm condition, and felt no desire to press onward to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Her zeal for Christ and for the glory of his name was departed, her love was cold and languid, and if at any time reviving somewhat, it resembled the sudden gleam of lightning which immediately vanishes, not the steady light which becomes brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. This lukewarm condition of the Laodicean Church shows that they

had entered on a backsliding course, and were flattering themselves in their own eyes, while their iniquity was becoming hateful to him, whose eyes are as a flame of fire. How had the gold become dim ! and the most fine gold changed ! Now they saw no beauty in him that they should desire him, his excellence had departed from their vision. "They forsook the fountain of living waters, and hewed out unto themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which could hold no water."

"I would thou wert cold or hot, so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

There are some who are ever learning, and never coming into the knowledge of the truth, constant in their attendance at all meetings for religious purposes, liberal in their contributions to promote Christian objects, but at the same time cold to him who gave his life for them. They are willing to give to Christ all that they have, except their hearts, and these they reserve for some secret idol—but "cursed be the man whose heart departeth from the Lord"—without love, all our professions are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. "My Son give me thine heart," less than this cannot please him, more he asks not. "I would thou wert cold or hot, so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." This is a strong expression, and implies his intention to dissolve the connection ; food ejected from the stomach will not become a constituent part of the body, but is henceforth loathsome, and is cast into the dunghill, so shall it be with all lukewarm professors, who name the name of Christ with their mouths, but whose hearts are estranged from him.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

The Church in Smyrna was poor in earthly possessions, but possessed of the “true riches,” which are enduring: rich in his estimation, who is the all competent judge between the true and the spurious. Whereas this Church gloried in the possession of “much goods laid up for many years,” which had the effect not only of reconciling them to the life that now is, but of so endearing it as to obscure and almost extinguish the bright prospects held out of glory and honour, and immortality. How different was their judgment from his; in their own estimation they were rich, in his, they were poor. In their own conceit, they had need of nothing; in his judgment, they were miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked, and were therefore destitute of all things; there was no soundness in them, and because they had drawn back, his soul had no pleasure in them.

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich.”

To buy gold from Christ is to buy the truth—the word of the truth of the Gospel, that word which by the Gospel is preached unto us, and referring to which the Apostle writes to Titus thus, “in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began, and hath in due time manifested his word through preaching.” This gold, tried in the fire, by which we are to be enriched, and which is purchaseable without money and without price, is God’s unspeakably precious gift of eternal life, through the

redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and now given in the form of a promise, as it is written,

“This is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life.”

This is the gold tried in the fire, to possess which is to be rich indeed. It is the word of the truth of the gospel, which being believed, quickens the soul, as it is written, “you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” It effectually worketh in all who believe it, calling men out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It is therefore compared to gold tried in the fire, and yet is much more precious than of gold which perisheth, for it liveth and abideth for ever. It is the word which God sent unto the children of Israel—and afterward to the Gentiles—preaching peace by Jesus Christ, being the ministry of reconciliation committed to the Apostles, as ambassadors from God, to announce, viz., that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses; having made Christ to be a sin-offering for them that they might be the righteousness of God in him.

“And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.”

This white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, of which the Apostle wrote, desiring that he might be found clothed therewith, “not having on his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” “Christ is made of God unto us righteousness,” and thus we are accepted in the

beloved, who is our representative before God, the new and living head of the whole race. This great truth, when understood and believed, at once sets the mind at rest, reconciles the heart to God, removing the enmity which had lain hidden in the depths of the soul, delivers from the fear of death, and opens up a glorious prospect, commencing where men's prospects usually terminate. The knowledge of Christ as the Lord our righteousness, gives peace with God, and confidence in his promise of eternal life; "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." Discerning ourselves thus united to Christ; we have on, and are consciously clothed with, that white raiment, whereby the shame of our nakedness will not appear.

"And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see."

It is not, as so many different prescriptions, any one of which may effect the remedy, but all are required, the gold to enrich, the white raiment to clothe, and the eye-salve to enable us to see, and the last must be the first in the order of acceptance, for until we see, we cannot put on the apparel, nor possess ourselves of the precious metal, whereby we become enriched. The eye-salve is the blood of Christ sprinkled on the conscience. There is a method of quieting the rebukes of conscience, which may give a temporary but delusive peace, but the right apprehension of God's own Son, having given himself to be a sacrifice for us, is an effectual and permanent antidote to a troubled conscience, because however alarming the magnitude of the offence, the atonement is of still greater magnitude. This then is the eye-salve, viz., a firm persuasion that we are by the

atoning sacrifice of Christ, "purged from our old sins," as it is written, "he gave himself a ransom for all," and again, "when he had by himself purged our sins." The eye-salve is the application of the blood of Christ to the conscience, removing the load of guilt by which it is weighed down, giving peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and enabling us to lay hold on the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. When thus we see that we are purged from our old sins, we become able "to see afar off," to look beyond things seen and temporal, to things unseen and eternal; bright prospects of glory, honour, and immortality open up to our vision, not on account of works of righteousness which we have done, but because God, who cannot lie, hath promised to man the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory, of his own free grace, and of which nothing can deprive us but unbelief. How precious then is the eye-salve, it opens the inward sight, and pours celestial light upon the eye-balls of the blind. "The eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we know the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Until the application of this eye-salve, we are in darkness, and walk in darkness, and know not whither we go, because that darkness hath blinded our eyes, and thus we are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our hearts; death continues to be the king of terrors, and we, through fear of death, remain all our lifetime subject to bondage.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

My Son dispise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, as a father the

Son in whom he delighteth. As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so are his rebukes, and chastenings, which are all for our profit, that we may become partakers of his holiness. When we are tried we shall come forth purified as by fire. He will bring us into the net, he will lay affliction on our loins, he will make us to pass through fire, and through water, and may suffer men to walk over our heads, but in the end he will bring us to a wealthy place. If we be without chastisement whereof all (that ~~are~~ his) are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. The Captain of our salvation was himself made perfect through suffering, and so must his followers "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Sometimes, as in the case of backsliders, his chastising hand is laid on us in the form of bodily disease, as with the Corinthian Church, "for this cause, many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep," and this he does not vindictively, "for he afflicteth not willingly, nor grieveth the children of men," but because he loves, and that we might not be condemned with the world.

"Be zealous therefore and repent."

Repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, for Godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of. The prodigal repented when he arose and went to his father, and all true repentance begins with returning to God and no more departing from him. Repentance, is to turn to God as the clay to the seal, to receive his impress, that we may be conformed to his image.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

He stands at the door of every heart and knocks, he stands desiring admission, and knocks to intimate

his desire to come in and dwell with us, and he does dwell with all who have thus received him. "What! know you not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" But he will depart if his knock is unheard, or unregarded, and may never return. He will say, "I called, but ye refused, I stretched out my hand, but ye did not regard, and now I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

"If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

"If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He dwells in them who hear his voice and open the door; then there is a feast of fat things—of fat things full of marrow—of wines on the lees well refined." Not the "feast of reason and the flow of soul." Not "the noisy laughter of the fool, which like the crackling sound of blazing thorns doth quickly fall in ashes to the ground." Not the hilarity of giddy sport, nor the "vain delights of earth to share." Not the pleasures of this world, which are but for a season, but the peace of God, which passeth all understanding; a participation in that kind of blessedness which angels possess, and which is without alloy, and a foretaste of joys which are at God's right hand, and of pleasures which are for evermore.

"To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne."

Ye who have followed me; when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, in the re-

generation (i.e., in the times of the restitution of all things), ye shall sit with him on thrones judging the tribes of Israel. Israel shall become as the stars of heaven for multitude, and every individual of their numberless millions shall know the Lord, and everlasting joy shall be on their heads, but there shall be a higher grade of humanity, consisting of those who in the present dispensation have been partakers of his sufferings, and having overcome, as he overcame, they shall sit with him on his throne, as kings reigning upon and over the earth, and not the earth only, but to the utmost bounds of creation; for the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; a participation in the glory of him, of the increase of whose kingdom and government there shall be no end. There is held out to them that overcome, the prospect of honour and glory, the most exalted, viz., to be joint-heirs with Christ, to sit with him on his throne, or on thrones around his throne, with ever-increasing brightness and excellence, according to the limitless resources of him who is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, ever doing wonders. Thus finishes the first part of this wonderful vision, concerning which it was given unto the Apostle to write, viz., the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are. The things which he had seen referred to the person of our great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, and the things which are, relate to our present position, and the duties devolving on us. He hath visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for himself, having broken down the wall of partition, separating Jew and Gentile, and causing both to have access to the Father, by one Spirit, through him.

NOTE.—The Author is indebted for his introduction to the Seven Epistles to Brown's Dictionary of the Bible.

INTRODUCTION

TO

“THE THINGS WHICH ARE TO BE
HEREAFTER.”

“ Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which are to be hereafter.”

INTRODUCTION

TO

“ THE THINGS WHICH ARE TO BE
HEREAFTER.”

IN a morning paper of recent publication, the following paragraph appears :—

“ Upwards of 1200 works have been written with the view of explaining the Book of Revelation ; yet, among the vast number of authors who have been so employed, no two are found to agree on every point.”

Such being the case, any further attempt to elucidate its contents may seem to be presumptuous, and would not have been undertaken, but from the conviction that there is still a new aspect from which the subject may be viewed, and which seems to have been overlooked in the erudition of both ancient and modern publications. The author's strong conviction that the book is not (as is generally supposed) a sealed, but an unsealed book, not a mystery, but a

mystery cleared up, by the simple principle of a literal rendering (where such is possible) of the successive prophetic visions, has led to the following pages. In this, as in the other prophetic writings, figures and metaphors abound, but they are simple and obvious, tending always to illustrate, and never to obscure the meaning. Where the language will bear a literal construction, it is the safe course to adopt it, and in applying this principle to the study of this book, it is confidently hoped that the formidable difficulties so long entertained respecting its meaning will vanish.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.”

The following remarks, as extracted from the work of that distinguished theologian, Dr. Dwight, on the “Principles of Scriptural Interpretation,” are deemed so appropriate as to form a fitting introduction to the study of this book, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ:”—

“As the doctrines concerning this singular person (the Messiah) are of the highest moment to plain uneducated men, as well as to men of learning, it is certain that the things really revealed, are so revealed, that such men, acting with integrity, can understand them sufficiently to make them proper and useful objects of their faith. Of course the terms in which they are revealed are used in such a manner as these men can understand. They are, therefore, used according to the plain, customary, obvious meaning; the meaning which they have in the usual intercourse

of mankind. Of course also they have no technical, philosophical, or peculiar signification ; because, if thus used, they could never be understood by such men ; or, in other words, by almost the whole body of mankind. . Again, The Scriptures are undoubtedly the best commentators on themselves, wherever they professedly undertake to explain their own language. Again, Who with these solemn commands and awful denunciations before him, can think for a moment of rejecting the obvious meaning of the Scriptures, and substituting a meaning not contained in the words, but contrived by himself. The Scriptures were written for mankind at large. Of these, ninety-nine hundredths, to say the least, are plain, uninformed men, incapable of understanding language in any other manner than the known customary one. If then, the obvious meaning is not the true one, they are absolutely unable ever to find the true one ; and so far the Scriptures were written in vain. But it cannot be supposed that God would do any thing in vain, and still less, that he would disregard the salvation and the souls of ninety-nine hundredths of his creatures, when publishing his word ; and cause it to be so written that this great number could not, if ever so sincerely disposed, possibly find out its meaning, nor of course the way to eternal life ; while, at the same time, he made provision for the remaining one hundredth. It will not, I suppose, be pretended that the soul of a learned man is of more value in the sight of God than that of an unlearned man. But if the meaning of the Scriptures is to be discovered, not by words, but by a contrived accordance with preconceived philosophical opinions, no unlearned man can find out this meaning at all. The Scriptures are intended for plain men, and plain men find a plain meaning in them ; they are hid from the wise and

prudent—in their own eyes—and revealed unto babes—such as understand words in their simple, natural, and obvious meaning. The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Again, that the language of the Scriptures is to a great extent, and in a high degree, figurative, is unquestionably true. But certainly there are limits to this character, not only in Scriptural, but all other language. It must, I think, be admitted that we are to consider the language of the Scriptures especially, and of all other good writings generally, as figurative, only in accordance with the following rules :—

1. That the figure be agreeable to the state of the mind of him who uses it; that is, to his views and feelings.

2. That it be founded on some analogy or relation to the subject.

3. That it accord with the discourse, so far as to make sense.

4. That in the Scriptures it violate no doctrine declared, at least by the writer.

5. That it be so obvious as not to demand invention or contrivance in the reader.

6. That it be explicable according to the opinions or other circumstances of those for whom it was written, so as to be capable of being understood by them.

7. That it suit the occasion and other circumstances of the discourse.”

OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE

ON THE

MOUNT OF OLIVES,

IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE EVENTS HAVE BEEN,
AND ARE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

AND as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here ?

And Jesus answering, saith unto him, Seest thou these great buildings ? Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, asked him privately, Tell us when shall these things be ? and what sign will there be when these things come to pass. And Jesus answering them, began to say, When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh, then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them who are in the city depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereunto, for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to them that are with child, and to them who give suck in those days, for then shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and

Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ; and [*when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*] this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come. They shall lay their hands upon you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the councils, and in the synagogues shall ye be beaten, and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you ; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye ; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. And I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed, both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends ; but there shall not an hair of your head perish (therefore), in your patience possess ye your souls. Then ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven. All these are the beginnings of sorrows, and all these things must first come to pass, but be ye not troubled, for the end shall not be yet ; nevertheless, as when the branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand, so likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Wherefore when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads,

for your redemption draweth nigh. Verily I say unto you that [*the generation who shall see the beginning of those things, shall also see the end of them*] that generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away, although of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. At that time shall many false prophets arise, and shall deceive many. Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, but take heed that no man deceive you ; iniquity shall then abound, and the love of many shall wax cold ; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. [*After these things shall be seen the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, i.e., in the temple of God, showing himself to be God.*] Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains ; let him who is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house ; neither let him that is in the field turn back again to take up his garment. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days ! but pray ye, that your flight be not in winter, neither on the Sabbath day. Then [*after that*] shall be great tribulation [*the seven vials full of the wrath of God*], such as was not since the beginning of the world, to that time, no nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, those days shall be shortened then [*after the great tribulation*]. If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or Lo, he is there, believe him not. For [*then*] there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect. Take ye heed, behold I have

foretold you all things. . Wherefore if they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the desert, go not forth ; behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not ; for as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be ; and wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and upon the earth shall be distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken ; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory ; and with a great sound of a trumpet he shall send his angels, and they shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree, when her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye see and know of your ownselves that summer approacheth, so likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily, I say unto you, that generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.

THE THRONE OF GOD REVEALED.

CHAPTER IV.

1. After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven ; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me ; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

2. And immediately I was in the Spirit ; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone ; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats ; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment ; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices ; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the Seven Spirits of God.

6. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal ; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four cherubim full of eyes before and behind.

7. And the first cherub was like a lion, and the second cherub was like a calf, and the third cherub had a face as a man, and the fourth cherub was like a flying eagle.

8. And the cherubim had each of them six wings about him ; and they were full of eyes within ; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.

9. And when those cherubim give glory, and honour, and thanks, to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

“ After this I looked.”

A different form of vision now takes place. Directing his eyes upward the prophet beheld, and

“ A door was opened in heaven.”

He saw not the heavens opened, but an opening in the heavens, like a door, through which one might enter, and while in the act of surveying this wonderful scene, a voice of great power salutes his ears.

“ And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me.”

It was the authoritative voice of the Lord himself to his servant John ; a voice of great power and strength, as if spoken through a trumpet, and which said,

“ Come up hither and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.”

The subject of these pages relates to events which were to take place "hereafter," that is, to precede and be consequent upon the coming of the Lord; they refer to the times of the revelation of Jesus Christ. The designation of the book is "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass," which things the Apostle connects with his appearing, saying, "behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

"And immediately I was in the Spirit."

God can maintain the body in life while the Spirit is absent from it, or can impart to it for the time such powers as are proper to a spiritual body. The Apostle Paul knew not which of these was the case with himself when he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, such as were not possible to be uttered. What are the peculiar characteristics of that state or condition of mind, expressed by being in "the Spirit," can be known only to such as have been indwelt by the Holy Ghost, in much fulness of measure. Before any of these visions commenced, John had been in preparedness for such divine manifestations, for he was "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day, when he heard the great voice behind him, and now he is, by the Spirit of God, entranced, and rendered capable of witnessing a series of visions, such as had never before been shown to any of the sons of men.

"And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne, and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone."

“God sitteth on the throne of his holiness.”

He is the Ancient of days, whose garment is white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool ; his throne is like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him ; thousands, thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. “He dwelleth in light inaccessible and full of glory,” and his kingdom ruleth over all ; ten thousand suns blended in one would faintly image the glory of him who giveth light to all suns and systems, and whose goings forth have been of old, even from everlasting.

“And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.”

The rainbow is the emblem of peace, and of his eternal government. He is the God of peace, the king of Salem, which is king of peace ; he comes to destroy the enemies of peace, and to scatter the people that delight in war. “In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.” His throne shall be established for ever, as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. There is a blessed significance in the rainbow round about the throne, it expresses the benign excellence of him who sits upon the throne, and is the token of his covenant of peace. Thus he spake to Noah, “I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth ; and it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh, and

the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." And God said unto Noah, "this is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting."

The nearer the throne the higher the exaltation. The nearest of all to it is he who sits on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, thus also the highest in the kingdom of Christ will be those who sit at his right hand and at his left in his kingdom, even them, for whom it is prepared of his Father. Angels are great in power and in might, but man, although made a little, while inferior to the angels, will be raised to a higher dignity than they, for he will be "crowned with glory and honour, and be set over the works of God's hands." These elders, and the cherubim together, represent the whole body of the redeemed, as appears from the new song which they sing unto the Lamb.

"Clothed in white raiment."

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." White robes are given to the redeemed. They are said to have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. On the day that he appears in the clouds of heaven, they also shall appear clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

“ And had on their heads crowns of gold.”

Peter said to Jesus, Lord we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore? Jesus answered and said unto him, Ye who have followed me, in the regeneration; when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit with him on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel. These elders are kings and priests unto God. As kings they shall reign on the earth, and as priests, which is a still higher dignity, they shall stand at the golden altar, which is before the throne, offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. In the time of their pilgrimage they fed the flock of God which was among them, and now have they received from the chief shepherd a crown of glory which fadeth not away. As the Father hath given to him a crown of pure gold, so hath he given to them, as it is written, “ the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.”

“ And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices.”

These indicate the approach of judgments, and are heard at the commencement of each successive series of calamities; before the opening of the seals, and before the trumpets are blown, there are voices, and thunderings, and lightnings. And when the seventh or final vial is poured into the air, and the last trumpet is sounded, then are there voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, and great hail, all expressive of indignation and wrath, for, “ the Lord shall thunder in the heavens, and the highest shall give his voice, hailstones, and coals of fire” They proceed out of the throne, and come forth from him to whom vengeance belongeth.

“And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.”

The seven lamps of fire represent the Holy Ghost who proceedeth from the Father and from the Son, as it is written, “grace be unto you, and peace from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the Seven Spirits which are before his throne.” The Holy Ghost is also the seven eyes in the head of the Lamb, which are sent forth into all the earth, these are his eyes of fire with which he searcheth the reins and the hearts, and by which all things become naked and open to his sight, for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. The number seven signifies completeness, and perfection; thus the seven days form the complete week wherein God's works of creation were finished, as the seven thousand years shall form the completed week, when the great work of redemption and reconstruction shall be fully perfected, the last thousand of which shall form the day of rest, the Sabbath of rest which remains to the people of God.

“And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.”

Stretching out into eternity is this sea of glass—calm, peaceful, unruffled, and endless tranquillity is before him in the future of his government, “for of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” On this sea of glass, mingled with fire, are afterwards seen the martyrs who are beheaded for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, and who have not worshipped the personal Antichrist, nor his image, and have not received his mark upon their forehead or in their hand; these sing

the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, great and marvellous are thy works Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways thou king of Saints.

“And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne were four cherubim full of eyes before and behind.”

God dwells between the cherubim, they are his more immediate attendants, and honoured to be the ministers of his pleasure. The Seven Angels who pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth receive those vials from one of the four cherubim whose place is in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne.

“The first was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third had a face as a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle.”

The habits and dispositions, &c., of animals, are often used in Scripture to express character, hence the exhortation, being wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Thus the Lord is likened unto a lamb that had been slain, and again as the lion of the tribe of Judah, so those cherubim in their four faces denote boldness, gentleness, intelligence, and swiftness, forming the perfect man, bold as a lion, gentle as a lamb, filled with wisdom and with power.

“And the four cherubim had each of them six wings about him.”

With twain of those wings, each covereth his face, with twain he covers his feet, and with twain he doth fly. I heard, said Ezekiel, the noise of their wings like the noise of great waters, as the voice of

the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host, and they ran and returned, as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

“And they were full of eyes within.”

Eyes before and behind, and eyes within, all signify vast powers of discernment and knowledge, far transcending our conceptions, for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered unto the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

“And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

These ascriptions of praise were heard by a former prophet. “In the year that king Uzziah died [*the prophet Isaiah*]” saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim, each one had six wings, with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly, and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” Thus cherubim and seraphim unite in ascriptions of highest glory to him who sitteth upon the throne, they cease not because they weary not; it is their delight and glory to be unceasingly engaged in praising God.

“And when those cherubim give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him

that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory, and honour, and power : for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created."

One order of holy intelligences thus respond to another order, all mingling in holy harmony ; they fall down before the high and holy one who inhabiteth eternity and its praises, and cast their crowns before his throne, to indicate that those crowns proceed from him, and are held from him, acknowledging themselves to be but as of yesterday ; they worship him that liveth for ever and ever, saying, "Thou art worthy O Jehovah, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Such was the glorious appearance presented to the eyes of John, of the temple of God in heaven, and of the throne of God, and of him who sat thereon. Jehovah himself was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone, and the likeness of his throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone. And I saw, said Ezekiel, as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward. I saw as it were the appearance of fire, with brightness round about, as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain.

THE BOOK GIVEN TO THE LAMB.

CHAPTER V.

1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3. And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look therein.

5. And one of the elders saith unto me, weep not : behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6. And I beheld, and lo in the midst of the throne and of the four cherubim, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8. And when he had taken the book, the four cherubim and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us

to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth.

11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the cherubims, and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ;

12. Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying : blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four cherubim said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever.

“ And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.”

The book seen in the right hand of God is “ the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ,” a narrative of the events which will immediately precede, and accompany his second and glorious appearing ; it contains a revelation of the future, which, until now, had been hid with God. There had indeed been partial developments in the writings of the prophets, and still more in the discourse delivered by our Lord in reply to the interrogation of his disciples, what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age ? but not

until **now** did it seem good to him to give a detailed and succinct narration of those great events, for the benefit of his saints upon the earth. This book or scroll has two great divisions, the part written within and unfolded by the successive opening of the seals, commences with the sixth chapter, which, being opened, and their contents declared, terminates with the ninth chapter. In the tenth chapter we behold the little book opened, and in the hands of Christ, and by him given to the Apostle, to whom the contents on the back side of the scroll were then to be communicated; because, said he, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," which prophesy commences with the eleventh chapter, and onward to the end of the book. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," but this book is pre-eminently the book of God, being written like the tables of the law with the finger of God, and received directly from God, through Jesus Christ. Up until the date of the opening of the seals its contents were hid within the bosom of the Almighty, but now it is no more a sealed, but an unsealed book, whose contents are open for the benefit of all.



"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon."

The book appears in the hand of the Almighty, but none know its purport; a proclamation goes forth inviting any who was worthy to come and take, and unseal, and disclose its sacred contents, but none was

found worthy of this high honour ; a consciousness of unworthiness seems to have pervaded all ranks and degrees of angels and saints. None were worthy to approach to look at, far less to take and unfold, the sacred mysteries. If any had been found, they might have had whereof to glory, but both in heaven and on earth there can be no glorifying but in God ; all other glory is idolatry.

“ And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look thereon.”

John was ashamed of himself and of the race to which he belonged ; he looked around the vast assemblage of brilliant and glorified personages, all of whom resembled gods, before whom he could prostrate himself, and yet none of them all were worthy of the high honour of approaching to take this book out of the hand of the Eternal. He wept, his eyes were bedewed with tears, and his heart filled with sadness, but God, who comforteth those that are cast down, speedily sent to him relief from sorrow, and turned his mourning into joy.

“ And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not ; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”

It is observable that not by one personage only is John addressed, but by several. In the Isle of Patmos, and sometimes in the course of this great vision by our Lord himself, sometimes by a voice direct from the throne, sometimes by glorified saints of various degrees of dignity, highest among whom, except the cherubim, were the four and twenty elders, and one

of these now spake to the Apostle, "I come to put away your grief. There is one of the human race found worthy of God to take the book, and to open the seals, even the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David." Our Lord sprang out of Judah, and he is the head or lion of the tribe. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall raise him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, when Shiloh comes; and unto him shall be the gathering of the people." (Gen. xlix. 8, 9, 10.) Here then is the Shiloh, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, unto whom, at his coming, shall be the gathering of the people, "for the princes of the people shall be gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham, to whom the shields of the earth belong;" and he is the root of David, while, at the same time, a branch growing out of his roots—the root and the offspring of David, the bright and the morning star—he hath prevailed to open the book, being alone found worthy.

"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four cherubim, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the Seven Spirits of God."

In the previous verse the great personage now introduced upon the scene is described as a Lion, and so he will prove to his enemies in the day of his sore displeasure, when he will go forth to execute vengeance on them that know not God. "The Lord will

roar from on high, he will utter his voice from his holy habitation;" and as described in the tenth chapter of this book, "he shall cry with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth." When once his wrath begins to burn, blessed shall they be who put their trust in him; but now he appears as a Lamb in the midst of the throne, "a lamb as it had been slain." "The Lamb of God who hath taken away the sin of the world." And the seven horns and seven eyes express his omnipotence and omniscience. All power is given unto him in heaven and on earth, and it is he who searcheth the reins and the hearts.

"And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

He alone of all who dwell in heaven is found worthy to be the channel of communication between God and men, and there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, or whereby we may communicate with the most High, for there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus—partaking as he does of the nature of God, and of the nature of man—and through him we have access by one spirit unto the Father.

"And when he had taken the book the four cherubim and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb."

He took the book or received the book from him who sat upon the throne, and was thereby declared to be worthy. There is thus an excellence in Christ which very far surpasses all other. "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy mouth, therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." "It

hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," and that to him every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth.

"Having every one of them harps."

There is instrumental as well as vocal music in heaven, and such will exist for ever in the highest perfection, blending together in most glorious harmony, evermore attuned to the honour and praise of him who created all things, and for whose pleasure they are and were created.

"And golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."

The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The prayers of Saints are odoriferous before God, when mingled with the precious incense of the Redeemer's righteousness; and the cherubim, and the elders, all of them priests to God, present them on the golden altar which is before God, as odours of a sweet smell, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ.

"And they sung a new song."

As there is continual joy in heaven, so is there continually the voice of praise and thanksgiving. They sing the songs of heaven. They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb; but there are new songs introduced, as new developments are made of the riches of the wisdom and goodness of God, and when the Lamb appears with the book in his hand, it becomes the occasion of the introduction of a new song, and the words of the song are these,

“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof ; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.”

The purchased inheritance is the earth, and the book is the revelation of the Son's investiture therein, as King of kings and Lord of lords. The honoured one is Christ, he is “Lord of all.” When the book is transferred from the right hand of him that sat upon the throne, unto the Lamb, it becomes the signal for universal homage and adoration ; they fall down before the Lamb, and render to him the homage that is due to God, “he in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” they worship and adore. The ground of his worthiness to take the book from the hand of God was the great work which he had just accomplished, he had laid down his life for us, “therefore, said he, doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again ; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again ; this commandment have I received of my Father.” It is now past, he appears before the throne like unto a lamb as it had been slain, having by his death brought to us redemption, and likewise redeemed the lost inheritance, and now none but him is worthy to announce the divine purpose to restore the Lordship thereof to man. Therefore, they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. To be redeemed is to be bought back, repurchased by Christ, brought from slavery to freedom, from being the devil's bond men to become Christ's free men ; for if the Son make us free we are free

indeed. The cherubim and elders represent the redeemed out of every "kindred, and tongue, and people, and nations." The elders surround the throne, and the cherubim are in the throne, thus holding the highest places of dignity and honour in heaven.

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests."

Kingly and priestly dignity form the birthright of all the Sons of God, an honour and dignity which will never be withdrawn.

"And we shall reign on the earth."

The earth, with the heavenly Jerusalem in its immediate vicinity, is the future habitation of God, and of Christ, and of his Saints. It is not now worthy of God, but when there shall be no more curse, when he who sits upon the throne shall make all things new, then the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely, even as the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious. "God hath made it to be inhabited, he hath made it not in vain." Yea, the "world shall be established that it cannot be moved" (Psalm xciii. 1), and his throne shall be set in the midst of it for evermore, and under him, "the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and all nations shall serve and obey him," "for yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be but the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." (Psalm xxxvii.)

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the cherubim and the elders.”

The original inhabitants of heaven were the angels—these are the morning stars that sang together—and the sons of God who shouted for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid. Bless the Lord ye his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word. Bless the Lord all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure. “He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire;” an order of beings greater in power and in might than man, while in his mortal condition, but not eventually so, he being inferior to the angels, only “for a little while.” They are all pure and holy, and delight in the well-being of man; for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Concerning the great mysteries of redemption, it is written, that the angels desire to look into them; and with respect to their present employment, “they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,” concerning whom also, he giveth his angels charge to keep them in all their ways, to bear them up in their hands, lest they dash their foot against a stone. They have their stated seasons of presenting themselves before the Lord, and on this great occasion were all assembled together to witness the acknowledged worthiness of the Lamb to open the book, and unloose the seals thereof. They hold a subordinate place in heaven to man, and do hold it without any invidious feeling; forasmuch as the Lord of hosts took not on him the nature of angels, but of man, they gladly yield the place of superior dignity and glory to man, and thus they

occupy their place around the cherubim and elders, as well as around the throne.

“And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”

The first mention of the angels in Scripture, as expressive of numbers, is when Jacob went on his way after his final separation from Laban. The angels of God met him, and when Jacob saw them, he said this is God's host, and he called the name of that place Mahanaim. To the shepherds of Bethlehem, there appeared a multitude of the heavenly host; and the Lord had at his command twelve legions of angels should he require their aid. Their visits to men have been few and far between, so far as human observation extends, not often appearing, and then only singly, as when Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, and to Mary the mother of Jesus, or as the two angels who led Lot out of Sodom, but their number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, a multitude which cannot be numbered. On this great event they combine together in ascriptions of glory to the Lamb,

“Saying, with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing,” and together with them, “every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb

for ever and ever." "And the four cherubim said Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

This ascription of glory to God and to the Lamb shall be continued when all things which are written are accomplished, and therefore, John in vision heard the whole earth responding to heaven's acclamations of glory to him who liveth for ever and ever, and who is the source of life and joy to all other beings. And here is ended the preliminary or introductory part. The book itself is as yet unopened, and its contents undisclosed, but no time is lost in unfolding its wonders, so soon as the Lamb is put in possession of the book. Being alone of all beings found worthy to receive this divine document, he holds it in his hand, and prepares, in the sight and hearing of heaven, to make known its sacred contents.

THE OPENING OF THE SEALS.

CHAPTER VI.

1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four cherubim saying, Come and see.

2. And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer.

3. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second cherub say, Come and see.

4. And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another. And there was given unto him a great sword.

5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third cherub say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four cherubim say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth cherub say, Come and see.

8. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held ;

10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?

11. And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

12. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake ; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood ;

13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14. And the heaven departeth as a scroll when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains ;

16. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

17. For the great day of his wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand.

“ And I saw when the lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four cherubim, saying, Come and sec.”

The great work now to commence is the disclosing of the contents of the book, and John, by the voice of one of the cherubim, as of thunder, is summoned, not to hear the contents of a book being read; but to see as it were a pictorial representation or vast moving panorama, descriptive of events, or "things which must shortly come to pass." It hath pleased God to make known to his people the judgments which shall precede and usher in the appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the description given of those judgments, are not as many suppose, in hidden and mysterious metaphors, but in plain and intelligible language, suited for those for whose benefit the revelation was intended, viz., the simple, the childlike, the wayfaring men, though fools, not the philosophic and the learned, not the "wise and the prudent," but the "ignorant and unlearned," such as Peter and John were accounted before the learned Sanhedrim. It is unto babes that God reveals his heavenly truth, and as it is true that except we become as little children, we shall not enter into the kingdom of God, so must we as little children sit down to the study of this holy book, encouraged thereto by him who hath said, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand;" careful, neither to add to, nor take away from, the words of this prophecy, lest we bring upon ourselves the denunciations contained at its close; and surely every man does add to the words, who imposes meanings such as their natural construction will not admit of, and takes away from the words, when refusing the simple truth contained in them, he supplies in their place the productions of his own fancy and imagination. It is a roll or scroll of parchment sealed with seven seals, but these

seals (it is supposed by Srotius) were not all seen on the outside, but there were seven volumes or rolls wrapt up one within another, and yet connected and attached to each other. Upon opening and unrolling the first, the second appeared to be sealed up, till that was opened, and so on till the seventh; and when the seventh seal was opened and its contents disclosed, the little book was then declared to be open, and the contents within being made known, the contents written on the back or outside are then declared, commencing with the eleventh chapter, preceded by the words "thou must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. The invitation, nay the *command*, to John, and through him to all the churches of Christ, and to all the people of God in every age, is to *come and see*, i.e., to draw near and understand, for what use were it to see if not to understand; and how shall we understand that which is beyond the reach of our apprehension. But truly the difficulties are not to be found in the book itself, but in the conflicting interpretations of commentators, labouring after hidden symbolical meanings such as never were intended by its great Author. The word is to all, come and see, and a promised blessing is to all who do so, "blessed is he that readeth" &c. To call upon us to see or to look into that which it was impossible for us to understand, would be to mock and to tantilize, and this is not the manner of God, he does not give a stone for bread, nor a serpent for a fish. "If men being evil, know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall our Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?" "Ask and ye shall receive," seek understanding, seek wisdom from him who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given.

“And I saw, and behold a white horse ; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.”

Here, in the introduction to this great subject, is first brought before us, him who is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega. This is the nobleman “who went into the far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return, and when he is returned, having received the kingdom,” he destroys his enemies, and assigns to his servants their several rewards. Now he receives the investiture of the kingdom, but he must fight to obtain it, it is through seas of blood that he must reach it, and not until his enemies have licked the dust and are made his footstool. The events hereafter recorded take place when the appointed period arrives for the Son to receive the kingdom from his Father ; at present he sits on his right hand, and will continue there to sit, until the time appointed of the Father ; then when that time arrives, he receives the crown, and is equipped for the war, he goeth forth conquering and to conquer. A series of judgments will then begin, at first comparatively light, but gradually increasing in magnitude and intensity, until all the inhabitants of the world are prostrated before him, and the earth is made “empty, and waste, and turned upside down.” The events contained in this book *cannot begin* even to be accomplished, and do not commence, until the set time has come when he receives the kingdom, until the “crown is given to him,” and until that time has arrived, he waits with expectation, “expecting until his enemies be made his footstool.” This fact in the outset sufficiently demonstrates, that as yet the whole is unfulfilled, as it was when first communicated to

John in the Isle at Patmos. The horse and the rider suggests the idea of a journey—he is in the far country, and is now about to return. By comparing this Scripture with others where horses are spoken of, there is no difficulty in comprehending it. The servant of Elisha, when his eyes were opened to see his protectors, beheld the whole mountain covered with horses of fire, and chariots of fire; and the swift-winged messengers which conveyed Elijah to heaven was described by Elisha as being “a chariot of fire and horses of fire.” When the heavens are opened in the concluding part of this great vision, and the Lord himself actually appears to the eyes of the astonished and panic-stricken nations, he is seen sitting on a white horse, and so also are his attendant saints; again, he is represented as riding on a swift cloud; and again, it is said, “he rode on a cherub, and did fly, yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind;” and again, they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and all his holy angels with him. His white charger denotes the purity of his mission, as it is written, “gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.” (Psalm xlv. 3.) When the nobleman who went into the far country receives the kingdom, he returns to take possession, but forasmuch as his subjects are in rebellion, they have to be subdued under him. On his departure to the far country they had sent a message after him, saying, “we will not have this man to reign over us,” and had seized on the inheritance, claiming the kingdoms as their own, irrespective of him—ruling not by the grace of God, but by the voice of the people—reversing the principle, that

power and authority descends from God. The kingdoms of the earth are therefore prepared to offer great resistance to him who "cometh in the name of the Lord," because the recognition of Him as Lord is hateful to the pride of the human heart. He comes in the name of Jehovah, to reign for him, and to continue until all enemies are subdued unto him; then when all things are subdued unto him, shall the Son also be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. It is for the avowed purpose of the subjugation of all opposition to the divine government, that the Son now proceeds, step by step, to approach to the possession of that throne, the crown of which is now given to him; assured of possession, because greater is he that is for him, than all they who are against him. The floods shall lift up their voice—"the floods shall lift up their waves, but Jehovah on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea than the mighty waves of the sea." The crown being given to Christ forms the commencement and the occasion of all the subsequent series of events recorded in this book. Art thou a king then? interrogated Pilate. Yes, for this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, but now is my kingdom not from hence, i.e., not from hence now, while the reign of the powers of darkness is permitted; but the time cometh when the whole assembly of heaven shall unite in ascriptions of praise, saying, "we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." And there shall be great voices in heaven saying, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." The Lord delayeth his coming, not willing that men

to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth.

11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the cherubims, and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ;

12. Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying : blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four cherubim said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever.

“ And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.”

The book seen in the right hand of God is “ the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ,” a narrative of the events which will immediately precede, and accompany his second and glorious appearing ; it contains a revelation of the future, which, until now, had been hid with God. There had indeed been partial developments in the writings of the prophets, and still more in the discourse delivered by our Lord in reply to the interrogation of his disciples, what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age ? but not

until **now** did it seem good to him to give a detailed and succinct narration of those great events, for the benefit of his saints upon the earth. This book or scroll has two great divisions, the part written within and unfolded by the successive opening of the seals, commences with the sixth chapter, which, being opened, and their contents declared, terminates with the ninth chapter. In the tenth chapter we behold the little book opened, and in the hands of Christ, and by him given to the Apostle, to whom the contents on the back side of the scroll were then to be communicated; because, said he, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," which prophesy commences with the eleventh chapter, and onward to the end of the book. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," but this book is pre-eminently the book of God, being written like the tables of the law with the finger of God, and received directly from God, through Jesus Christ. Up until the date of the opening of the seals its contents were hid within the bosom of the Almighty, but **now** it is no more a sealed, but an unsealed book, whose contents are open for the benefit of all.

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"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon."

The book appears in the hand of the Almighty, but none know its purport; a proclamation goes forth inviting any who was worthy to come and take, and unseal, and disclose its sacred contents, but none was

lying miracles from hell. Will the nations receive and welcome the message of these ministers of the most high, backed by supernatural manifestations of divine power. No ! As miracles have been banished from the earth because they indicate the presence of a superior power which the proud heart of man denies—for the fool hath said in his heart there is no God—so their reappearance will become the signal for renewed persecution. God is hateful to the human heart, and Christ was hated, being the express image of God ; they saw God in him, and therefore they hated him. Now shall these living epistles of Christ be known and read of all men ; and as they persecuted him, so will they persecute them who bear his image. For a little time they will be subjects of wonder, by and bye of ridicule and contempt, the jest of the profane, the song of the drunkard, and the mingled scorn and pity of the “ wise and prudent.” At length persecution will commence. Confiscation of property, exile, imprisonments, scourges, tortures, and death, but nothing shall move them ; neither will they count their lives dear unto themselves, so that they may finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God, and that the hour of his judgment is at hand. They sow their seed in tears, hoping to reap in joy. They go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, and will return again, bringing their sheaves with them. They proceed from city to city, until their sound has gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the earth. When thus the great testimony has been delivered, and has been by nearly all rejected ; when the announcement of the approaching reign of Christ has been treated with derision and contempt, and the messengers persecuted, then will the time have arrived

for “ the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled ;” and then will be realized in heaven what the Apostle saw in vision only, viz., the event disclosed by the opening of the first seal, which forms the first scene of the first act of this great drama. The times of the Gentiles will then be ended, because, they, not knowing that the goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering of God was designed to lead them to repentance, have only become hardened in impenitence, and thus have treasured up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. “ Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence ; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.” The preaching of the good tidings of the coming reign is the first step ; the persecution which follows, the second ; and the opening of the first seal the third. The nobleman receives for himself the kingdom, and immediately makes preparations for his return, he mounts his white charger, and equips himself with his weapons of war, and goes forth in his triumphal course, and blessed are all they that wait for him, for he will delay no longer, “ for the needy shall not alway be forgotten ; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.” Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail ; let the heathen be judged in thy sight, put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men. The harvest of the earth is becoming ripe—ripe for vengeance—for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets ; and shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him ; though he bear long with them, I tell you that he will avenge them speedily : the hour of his judgments now are come, and shall begin with the opening of the second seal.

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second cherub say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.”

Now the voice of mourning, lamentation, and woe, shall be heard in the streets, and the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride shall cease, for God will lay desolate all the lands upon the face of the earth. The judgments shall come, one by one, like the waves of the sea, each succeeding the other, after intervals of gradually diminished length, increasing in severity, until at last the full measure of Jehovah's wrath is filled up in the outpouring of the seven last plagues, “for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” They commence with war, followed by famine, and next by war, famine, and pestilence combined, the ravages of which will decimate a fourth part of the earth's inhabitants. These will be succeeded by an earthquake, unequalled by any which have preceded it, producing most fearful convulsions, burying cities with their inhabitants, overthrowing mountains, altering the positions of islands, and along with these, great sights and fearful signs from heaven, and all together forming the first scene of the great drama; being but the “beginnings of sorrows,” the first drops of the terrible shower which is to follow, eventually deluging the earth with a sea of fire, by which its inhabitants “shall be burned up, and few men left.” But what have the inhabitants of the world done to draw down from their Creator and their God such heavy, such unparalleled judgments? That he may be

justified when he thus acts, and be clear while hurling his thunderbolts of wrath against the human race, let us see whether there be not ample grounds for the terrible severity of these proceedings, that with the inhabitants of heaven we may justify him and say "even so Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." So long as men indulge in sin, they cannot understand the evil of sin, and cannot see the necessity for its punishment. The cross of Christ reveals the exceeding sinfulness of sin. By it we ought to form our judgment as to how God views it. But the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness hath not comprehended it. Men have loved evil, and after evil will they go, "they know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in darkness" (Psalms lxxxii. 5.) "Their ways are always grievous"—grievous to him who cannot look on iniquity : God is angry with wicked men every day. Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord. Know and see that it is an evil thing, and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee saith the Lord God of hosts. Yet such is the obliquity of perception caused by sin, that men will see no evil at all in departing from God, but every man will praise his neighbour when he "does well to himself," and will bless the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth ; he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful, i.e., to be no longer endurable by him with whom we have to do. When these judgments commence, God is about to terminate the Gentile dispensation for the same reason that he formerly cast off the Jewish nation. They would not be reconciled to God, although he had removed the obstacles to that reconciliation. God pointed to his Son, and said, return unto me for I have

redeemed you, but they replied, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Notwithstanding he was slow to anger, and not willing to pour out upon them the full measure of his indignation, but sent them partial chastisements, to turn them from the evil of their doings ; but in vain did he smite them, they received no correction, and so the wrath came upon them to the uttermost. And now the Gentiles know not the time of their visitation, and because judgment upon their evil works is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil. Jesus wept because of the infatuation of the Jews, and those tears of sorrow, which God, with human eyes, shed over Jerusalem, he now sheds over us. Israel was the dearly beloved of his soul. With what reluctance did he give him up to the final catastrophe. His repentings were kindled within him, and destruction did not come until every remedial course had failed. The natural heart is enmity against God, and in many ways it shows itself not loud, but deep. To recover men from this enmity, has been the great purpose of the mission of the Son of God, but there is no remedy for such as have trodden him under foot, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were washed from sin, an uncleansing thing. There is no other balm in Gilead, nor any other physician there, therefore nothing remains for those who reject him but a fearful looking for judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Because I called and ye refused ; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof ; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh—when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when

distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. When the die is cast, then a great ransom will not deliver, for the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever. (Psalm xlix. 8.) Then the handwriting on the wall, inscribed by the finger of God, is indelibly impressed, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." To every thing there is a season, and to every thing a time; there is a last hour to every man. There was a last hour to the antediluvian world, a last hour to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, a last hour to the devoted nations of Canaan, a last hour to Israel and Judah, and now a last hour to the Gentile dispensation; and its prelude of destruction appears in the opening of the first seal. Now the second seal is opened, and the beginning of the end is come; from this date judgment will follow on the heels of judgment, plague on plague after the manner of Egypt, each more severe and terrible than the former, until at the last, for the elect's sake, the days shall be shortened, otherwise no flesh could be saved. "And there went out another horse that was red." Red, the colour of the fluid which forms the life of man, and which is now to be shed in torrents—nation rising up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and an awful power unseen, giving perfect facility to peoples and nations to carry out their feelings of deadly hostility to each other. This great power is he who sitteth on the red horse, to whom it is given to take peace from the earth; to take peace, not from

one or two kingdoms, but from every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue. It will be sanguinary beyond all precedent; a great sword reaching from end to end of the earth, no people nor country exempt. The invaded countries shall be laid waste, the cultivated fields destroyed, and the terror stricken inhabitants fleeing to the mountains and places of concealment for shelter and safety. This is the beginning of the beginning of the end, and the fulfillment of those words, "ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass; but the end is not yet, for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows, and agreeably to this order, it is here set down."

"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third cherub say, Come and see, and I beheld, and lo, a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the cherubim say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Peace being temporarily restored in consequence of the exhaustion of the combatants, destruction upon destruction is suspended, the sound of the trumpet, and the alarm of war cease, and men return to their homes only to meet death in a slower, but more terrible form, even famine with all its attendant horrors. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that

cannot be eaten they are so evil ; and I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence. The judgment of the sword is followed by the judgment of famine—great scarcity of bread. The fruits of the ground which had been destroyed by devastation and war, now alas, refuse to reappear, for the windows of heaven are shut, and the dew and the rain withheld. The fig-tree will not blossom, and the fields will yield no meat ; the flocks are cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stalls. There is no interchange of commodities, nor purchasing of food from other countries, for the famine shall be universal, it shall be in all lands, for behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts doth take away the stay, and the staff—the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water. “ Their nobles shall send their little ones to the waters ; they come to the pits and find no water, they return with their vessels empty, they are ashamed and confounded, and cover their heads.” The ground is chapt, for there is no rain upon the earth ; the ploughmen are ashamed, and cover their heads. Yea, the hind calveth in the field, and leaveth it because there is no grass ; and the wild asses stand in the high places, and snuff up the wind like the dragons in the wilderness, their eyes fail because there is no grass. Want and starvation shall be everywhere ; they that were clothed in scarlet shall embrace the dunghill, for the famine will level all distinctions. All faces shall gather blackness, all knees grow feeble, and all hearts become faint. Then the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low ; and the daughters of the nations who were haughty, walking with stretched forth necks, with haughty gait and stately pride, shall hide themselves as ashamed, and instead of a sweet smell there shall be stink, instead of well set hair baldness,

instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth, and burning instead of beauty. As yet judgment is mingled with mercy ; if otherwise, then even in this early stage, no flesh could be saved, but the severity of this terrible visitation is mitigated : “ a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” The fruit of the vine, and the labour of the olive shall not entirely fail, and these may prove a partial relief to thousands who otherwise would succumb to the pressure of want. The wheat and the barley also will be regulated so that a measure containing about a wine quart may be obtained for about eight of our pence, a supply not sufficient for the daily nourishment of a child, but still able for a short period to maintain life in the body, and allay the cravings of hunger. The vapours shall not ascend, nor the rains descend, and the earth will not give forth food for man, nor grass for cattle ; but at this particular juncture God will mitigate the universal suffering that the nations may repent and give him glory. Of those who do see his hand in these judgments, it is written that “ they shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.” The period allotted for this judgment being past, the clouds no longer withhold their beneficent showers, again vegetation appears, and the trees are covered with foliage, all nature revives, and the lands are filled with plenty, but alas, with returning blessings there is no corresponding return of gratitude to him who crowns the year with his goodness ; and the deadly animosity of nation to nation still rankles in all its fierce malignity, waiting only for renewed strength and opportunity to break out afresh into deadly combat. The past is soon forgot, and revelry, and mirth, and gaiety resume their influence in the ball-room, the

theatre, and concert-room ; and the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. With returning strength the nations recommence their strife with tenfold bitterness ; not the strife of kings, but of peoples. The smith leaves his anvil, the mechanic his tools, the ploughman deserts his plough, and the merchant his wares and counting house ; all hearts burning with the desire of conquest, and thirsting for the blood of their brethren of mankind—" blood and fire, and vapour of smoke." A combination of causes rapidly lead on to another and still more terrible, and perhaps more protracted and fierce struggle, leading on to the opening of the fourth seal, which differs from the preceding, both in its increased severity and in its combining simultaneously the judgments of the second and third seal, with the addition of widespread pestilence, and terminating with a destructive inroad of wild beasts upon the now devastated and thinly peopled countries. The last rider was seated on a black horse, his name was not given, but his mission was to cause death from famine, reminding us of the Black Death, of which the following extract is from the *Cornhill Magazine* :—" The Black Death, like many other plagues of its class, can be traced far back into the remote east ; and there is no doubt that it was the same which ravaged China and Tartary in 1333. Fifteen years before its arrival on the shores of Europe, there had been a great famine in China, preceded by floods and earthquakes, which alone destroyed four hundred thousand persons, and in the following year no fewer than five million died there of this plague. From the remote east it made its way into Europe some years later, for pestilence often travels slowly, accompanying the migrations of

men, and being carried about in their clothing and merchandise ; it did not arrive in Europe until 1347, fifteen years after its outbreak in China. From China, says Hecker, the routes of the caravans lay to the north of the Caspian Sea, through Central Asia to Tauris, here ships were ready to take the produce of the east to Constantinople, the capital of commerce, and the medium of communication between Asia, Europe, and Africa. Contagion made its way along these channels, and Constantinople and the sea ports of Asia Minor were the foci whence the disease was carried to every country in Europe. Making its way across the European continent, it committed its greatest ravages (save perhaps in England) in Italy, raging terribly at Florence, where it was observed and described by Boccacio. Passing along the shores of the Mediterranean, it invaded France, by way of Avignon, spreading thence to England on the one hand, and to Germany on the other ; whence, like the cholera of the present day, it doubled back two years later to Russia, and so back to the east. The black death, so called from the rapid putrefaction of the bodies of its victims, was of the same nature as the oriental plague, viz., a putrid typhus, only of greater malignity. The boil and buboes of the latter disease were found in the former whenever the patient lived long enough to permit their development. The inhabitants of Europe at that time have been computed at a hundred and five million—a high estimate—of these, twenty-five million, or one fourth of the whole, perished. In England it was still more fatal, owing probably to the ruder habits of the people. During the the term of one year, viz., from August 1348 to August 1349, three-fourths of the whole population perished ; indeed, if we are to credit the annalists of the period, not more than one-tenth

escaped. Many succumbed in a few hours, like Senacherib's host ; none endured for three days. In France, numbers died on the spot where they were first smitten, as if struck by lightning. This terrible scourge having swept over the then known world, committing such destruction of life, and leaving behind it such misery and poverty as the world never saw before or since, at length died out, never again, we trust [*says the writer of the article*] to revisit the earth. It spared neither age, sex, nor condition ; the rich and the poor alike succumbed. There died in Venice the aristocratic, no less than one hundred thousand persons ; in Florence the refined, sixty thousand ; in Paris the gay, fifty thousand ; and in London the wealthy, a hundred thousand, while in busy, rich, industrious Norwich, there died the almost incredible number of fifty thousand persons, nearly the whole, one would suppose, of its inhabitants. At Avignon the deaths occurred with such frightful rapidity as wholly to baffle the attempts of the living to inter their relatives and friends ; and the Pope was obliged to consecrate the Rhine to allow of the dead bodies finding a hallowed resting place upon its bosom, until it finally committed them to the great deep."

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth cherub say, Come and see."

Pestilence is now to be superadded and combined with a repetition of the former judgments. When God sends pestilence, sometimes its effects are instantaneous, as with the first-born of Egypt at the midnight hour, or with the Assyrian army, a hundred and eighty-four thousand in a single night, sometimes

more gradual, as in the time of David, when three days were occupied in the immolation of seventy thousand by the angel's destroying sword. In a leader in the *Times*, the following remarks are made on that form of it, which lately visited, and indeed presently exists, in this country, called the Asiatic Cholera—"Its slow approach had been heard of for many months, as it lighted, or was wafted, or was carried here and there, from one town to another, or singled out a district for destruction. If we remember aright, there had been a prediction two years before that it would work its way to the west of Europe; but with the long disappearance of the plague, we had come to disbelieve in these marches of death, and, indeed, in pestilence altogether. They belonged to the age of barbaric conquests or mediæval dirt. The very horrors with which our oriental friends invested the "Asiatic Cholera," made men incredulous as to its presence in this favoured and enlightened region. It was, they thought, possible among the Tartars, Hindoos, or barbarians, living, nobody knew how. There it was probably a terrestrial influence of some sort, and would not cross the strait; however, it landed all at once in the north-eastern ports of this island, in ships from the north of Europe, and there could be no doubt that for once the sea had not saved us from a terrible invasion; even then people fondly hoped that the cholera would find enough to do in dirty ports, near the mud of tidal harbours, in closely packed lodging-houses, and among ill-living sailors, and the people that gather to them; but the fate of Sunderland, and a sea shore suburb of Edinburgh, warned London to take care of itself, and we had proclamations and quarantine. The cholera, however, took no notice of these idle forms, turned the flank of the quarantine, and appeared in

possession, not only of the "pool" and the port of London, but of inland towns and villages in Essex and Kent. From that time it went whether it listed, showing no distinction of towns. It attacked Oxford, spared Birmingham, reaped a deadly harvest at Dublin, raged at Paris, and desolated villages with, or without, though generally not without, reason. The single instances were the most terrible; distinguished personages were at great parties one day, and dead the next; men of business made appointments for the afternoon, and did not live to keep them; strong and healthy young men were of a fishing party or a pic-nic on Friday, and by Sunday morning were no more; housefuls of poor rotted like sheep. Panic systems of diet were adopted. It happened to be the finest fruit season ever known, but all fruit was forbidden. Market gardeners brought their fragrant waggon loads to the market in vain; the rash and self-indulgent revelled on unaccustomed luxuries; peaches, nectarines, apricots, and grapes, were, in the market phrase, a drug. The curate had the entire crop of the vicarage fig-tree, the best in the country. The confectioner had a bad season; for ice, except for application to cholera patients, in some queer empirical fashion was strictly prohibited; even potatoes were suspected, meat and bread, bread and meat became the almost universal diet. Frightened ladies ran from one place to another to escape the cholera, and meet it, if they did not bring it with them, nervous people thought every place and every air unwholesome, and at least one frightened gentleman proposed to live in a balloon. On the whole the devastation justified previous terrors. For some weeks the mortality in the metropolis was terrible; what is more the disease was naturalized. It has come out since in full force. We have also since that had a

more frightful, if not a more devastating novelty in the form of diphtheria." In allusion to a more recent pestilence which had taken its rise in Siberia, and as yet had not spread beyond the boundaries of Russia, the same leader continues—"Thus far we know little beyond the information published in another column as to the true nature and actual devastation of the new Russian pest; it has been reported to come from the Ural Mountains, or rather through them, for Siberia is spoken of as its home. We were then told that its victims amounted to hundreds a day, whether in the city of St. Petersburg, or the whole region affected, is not clear, but the number of deaths in the city alone has since been put at thousands. It is now said to have shown itself in Prussia and ports of the Baltic. The symptoms, a cramp in the back of the neck, rapidly extending to the whole frame, indicate affinities with cholera on the one hand and typhus on the other, and a disease probably arising from the same causes, and perhaps amenable to the same treatment as those two. This disorder however is said to have proved obstinate hitherto, as used to be said of cholera, and is still said of the real typhus. If the disease be indeed new, we must not be surprised at such novelties, for many such are recorded in history." The leader concludes with the following impressive observation:—"That perhaps this new and mysterious messenger of death fulfills a beneficent mission in calling upon us once more to set our houses in order, not that we may die, but that we may prolong the life of man."

“ And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed with him; and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth,

to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."

"This," says an old writer, "is the only rider that has a name given to him, and from hence we may learn what to call the rest—as the rider of the white horse, truth or Christ; the rider of the red horse, war; and the rider of the black horse, famine; and because the last, with other judgments, meet together under this seal, the rider of the horse is emphatically called Death, and Hell followed with him, i.e., next after him; Hell, the bottomless pit into which Satan himself shall be cast, and held bound during the millenium. Hell is now, and has all along been, receiving additions to her ruined population, but under the judgments of this seal she will greatly enlarge herself, and open her mouth without measure, and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. Death and Hell will have their commission assigned them over a fourth part of the human race, which, at the present rate of the world's population, would amount to three hundred million of souls, a number far exceeding any previous judgment ever inflicted on mankind. In the first conflict men were to kill each other, but in this judgment they are to kill and to be killed. To kill each other in war, and to be killed by the famine and by the pestilence, and finally by the wild beasts of the earth. Death is here impersonated, and is under the direction of him who hath the power of death, that is the devil, and on whom the restraining hand of the Almighty is now for a season withdrawn, to the extent of allowing him to carry off out of the land of the living one individual out of every four of the whole human family, and to convey their souls to

his dark and capacious territories, “ where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth ; ” to Hell, to the bottomless pit, of which the Angel or Gaoler-in-chief is Abaddon or Apollyon. The devil is the destroyer who hands them over to Apollyon, from whose custody they shall never be released, until they have paid the uttermost farthing, until they have discharged a debt which they never can discharge ; there they are immured in everlasting chains under darkness until the judgment of the great day, when being brought up in conjunction with their leaders, death and hell, for judgment, are, with them, cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. These great heads of the rebellion shall then go forth into everlasting punishment, and with them all the workers of iniquity ; but now, their commission is to destroy, and their powers are very extensive. It is a time of woe, and of anguish, and of bitter lamentation, and yet directly traceable to the malignant passions of men, for war brings on scarcity, and scarcity pestilence, and these, combining, depopulate the country, leaving the few survivors an easier prey to the wild beasts, and “ so these judgments have a tendency to make way one for another, in the order they are here represented.” The first scene of the great drama will terminate with an earthquake unprecedented for magnitude, and for its terrible consequences, and which will form a distinct judgment by itself. It does not follow immediately after the judgments of the second, and third, and fourth seals, for an interval occurs to admit of the opening of the fifth seal, but not of long duration, as the whole series of judgments from their commencement until their close, from the date on which the Lord goes forth on his white horse, conquering and to conquer, until the day on which the heavens are opened, and he appears as King of

kings, and Lord of lords, the whole will not occupy many years ; indeed, when the preliminary judgments expressed by "the beginnings of sorrows" are over, the time will be limited to seven years, being the last of Daniel's weeks, the seventieth. The generation who sees the beginning, will see the end, as it is written, for "that generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled." A short interval will now occur. The terrible exhaustion, and prostration caused by such accumulated calamities will require a suspension of blows from the heavy hand of God, and will be employed in restoring the desolations, and in bringing back the framework of society into shape ; but repentance is still far from the minds of men, they continue to choose their own ways, and to delight in their own abominations, to do evil in the sight of the Lord and to provoke him to anger, therefore his hand is stretched out still. A few months intervene, and the past tragedies begin to fade from the memory. Again the clouds pour down their blessings in plentiful showers, and the earth yields her supplies of food, and the nations resume their joyous hilarity. "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." "The harp, and the viol, the tabret, and the pipe, and the wine, are in their feasts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, nor consider the operation of his hands. Of the past, they say as the Philistines said, "it was a chance that happened to us," and may never again occur. Meantime the fifth seal is being opened, which has reference to matters within the veil, whether the forerunner has for us entered.

“ The fifth seal was opened, and I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held ; and they cried with a loud voice saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.”

Here is a cry for vengeance from within the veil, not intercessions for blessings, but imprecations for doom ; it proceeds from the souls of the martyrs whose blood was poured out for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. It is a cry, not uttered now for the first time, for it has been continuous and without intermission, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, who was slain between the temple and the altar, and onward in subsequent ages, by as many as have been put to death for the cause of truth. It is one united cry for vengeance. And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him ; though he bear long with them, I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. This prayer for vengeance shows that vengeance has yet to come, but will be restrained until this generation have filled up the measure of their iniquities, and have imbrued their hands again in the blood of the saints. Therefore, they have still to wait for a little season, and then “ the righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance. He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, so that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is God that judgeth in the earth.” It is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to his enemies, viz., everlasting destruction from his presence, and from the glory of his power. The cry of the saints for vengeance does not proceed from vindictiveness,

but that the righteousness of God may be manifested in the destruction of the workers of iniquity, and for this they pray, that God may avenge their blood. The actual perpetrators may have long since been removed, but the iniquities of the fathers must be visited on the children, and on the closing generation will be visited all the righteous blood which hath been shed from the beginning of the world. The impelling motive to the cry for vengeance is their zeal for the holiness of God and for his truth.

“And white robes were given unto every one of them.”

Now “we wait for the hope of righteousness by faith,” but when the time of probation is past, and the victory obtained, the Lord will be our righteousness for ever. These white robes will never be soiled, neither will they ever grow old, and their now receiving them is tantamount to a declaration of indissoluble and eternal union with Christ.

“And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, yea, saith the spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. The interval between death and the resurrection is to the believer a time of rest; “they enter into peace, they rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.” There the saints are joyful in glory, they sing aloud upon their beds, their condition is most blessed. They have departed this life, and are with Christ, which is far better; their earthly house of this tabernacle being dissolved, they have a building of God, an house not made with

hands eternal in the heavens, even the new Jerusalem, which cometh down from heaven as an eternal abode, at the nuptials of the Lamb and his spouse. But as yet they rest, the time for the adoption, even the redemption of their bodies, is not full come ; for that glorious consummation they have still to wait, because the mystery of iniquity is not quite complete, nor the man of sin, the personal Antichrist, brought fully on the stage, who shall oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, blaspheming the sacred name of Jehovah, and persecuting with unrelenting hatred all who cleave to him. They are to rest yet for a little season, “ until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled.” There is therefore at this crisis still unfulfilled a persecution of the people of God, and that the most sweeping and deadly of any to which they have hitherto been subjected, a persecution not confined to any particular locality or kingdom, but extending throughout the entire limits of Antichrist’s sway, a persecution from which none shall escape otherwise than by dissociating himself from human society, and betaking himself to the wilds and forests, to the dens and caves of the earth, with whom none dare buy, or sell, or interchange commodities. The number of the elect will not be complete until this final hecatomb of sufferers by the fires of persecution be offered up. The declaration that there is yet a little season in which events have to transpire, shows that the judgment in the next seal is not the end, although of such an awful character as to lead the earth’s inhabitants to believe for the moment that the last day has arrived, as appears from their calling upon the rocks to cover them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne. The beginnings of sorrows, which form the preliminary of the terrible

drama about to commence, will be completed by the judgment unfolded in the opening of the sixth seal.

“ And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake ; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind ; and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

Of all the fearful sights and great signs which shall be from heaven to indicate the near approach of that great day, this will be one of the greatest ; a universal panic and fearful presentiment will take hold of men's minds. A great earthquake, not the greatest, for there shall be one greater still, which will immediately precede the appearing of the Lord, but next to it this will take the precedence of all that has gone before. Oscillations of the earth have been more or less common in many parts of the earth, and in all ages, but this earthquake will take a fearful prominence, both from its magnitude and its universality. The whole earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and every mountain and island shall be removed out of their places. It may not be utterly broken down, and be clean dissolved, as it shall be by the last earthquake, but it shall be moved exceedingly, and so produce those terrific appearances in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars. God, who hangeth the earth upon nothing, who taketh up the isles as a very little thing, God, who caused the rotatory motion of the earth to be suspended, that the sun might appear to stand

still in Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, and who on another occasion compelled it to make a retrograde movement, throwing back the day from the evening to the morning, to the astonishment of the nations then living, that God can, with equal ease, so affect the earth's orbit on this occasion, that all those appearances will be realized in the sight of men ; the sun becoming black, as sackcloth of hair, and the moon, instead of her silvery ray, presenting the red glare as of blood, caused by the altered position of the earth. The diurnal rotation of the earth being suddenly increased, and with equal suddenness diminished, and again restored to its equilibrium, would certainly produce those appearances in the heavens which would therefore seem to depart as a scroll rolled together, and the stars to fall from heaven as figs from a fig tree. The tremendous concussions, by which every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places, must be attended with consequences of the most frightful description, with appalling loss of life, while the consternation will be universal.

“ And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains ; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand.”

Conscience, that faithful monitor, so long silenced, is now able, at least for a time, to make his voice be heard in every man's bosom, and that voice must be

one of stern rebuke for departure from God, and disregard to his holy commandments. Conscious guilt produces terror in the presence of that unerring judge, to whom all hearts are open, and who will render unto every man according to his works. As Adam hid himself from the Lord God among the trees of the garden, so shall the now undistinguishable multitudes invoke the mountains and the hills to cover them from the face of that same God. The previous judgments of war, famine, and pestilence, although unprecedented in severity, might be accounted for on grounds remote from divine interposition, but none, at least for the time it lasts, seem to mistake or misrepresent this terrible convulsion. Like the magicians of Pharaoh, they are at length constrained to admit that this "is the finger of God," and the impression is universal from the highest to the lowest, that the great day of his wrath is come, and rather than meet him they prefer to be for ever embedded in the hearts of the mountains, or in the bowels of the earth. There is nothing more appalling than the occurrence of an earthquake, because there is no fleeing from it, all are prostrated by a sense of utter helplessness under the infliction. It is possible to flee from a conflagration, to escape the perils of shipwreck, but when the earth itself becomes unsafe under the houses we inhabit, when the ground we tread cannot be depended upon, where or to whom shall we flee for safety. There was a great earthquake on the day of our Lord's crucifixion, and on that day darkness covered the land from the sixth to the ninth hour; the rocks were rent, and graves were opened, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. Men said that either the last day was come, or the God of nature was dying. With how much greater reason will the supposition pervade all classes

that the great day of his wrath is come, when such an unprecedented catastrophe shall occur. Terrible as it shall be, there is mercy mingled with the judgment. If men would even now fear God, and give glory to him, they might yet escape the final doom of the impenitent. This is that day spoken of by Joel the prophet, and quoted by Peter in the Acts, "when the earth shall quake, and the heavens shall tremble, the sun and moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining," which things shall take place "before that great and notable day of the Lord come." Events have yet to transpire, compared with which the past are but as the first drops of the coming deluge. The condition of the world for days and weeks after this tremendous catastrophe must be such as to cause a general suspension of the usual occupations of life; but as this, like the previous inflictions, shall pass away, and again be succeeded by a momentary tranquillity, men will begin to ascribe its occurrence to secondary or imaginary causes. The heavens resume their former appearance, and the earth yields its accustomed supplies of food, business will be resumed, and men's spirits begin to revive from the deep dejection into which they had fallen. As the date of its occurrence recedes into the past, a few months suffice to restore confidence, in the hope that such a catastrophe will not recur, being altogether exceptional in the history of the world. Again the voice of conscience will be stilled; no man will return from his wickedness, saying, What have I done, but all will proceed on their course as the horse rusheth into the battle.

THE SEALING OF THE TWELVE T R I B E S.

CHAPTER VII.

1. And after these things I saw four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God ; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.

4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed, and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve

thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ;

10. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and about the cherubim, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God.

12. Saying, Amen ; Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these who are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ?

14. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple ; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

“And after these things, I saw four angels standing on in the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.”

The beginnings of sorrows have been now realized, and the clouds are thickening and darkening. A breathing space after the terrible earthquake is allowed, but the days of remaining grace are few, and the intervals of judgment will be shorter, and shorter, as the end draws nigh. The judgments will increase in severity and terror, and be consummated in the actual coming of the Son of God to break the nations as with a rod of iron, and to tread them in pieces as a potter's vessel; to cover the face of the earth with the slain, so that a man, a living man, will be difficult to be found, for thus saith the Lord, “I will make a man more precious than gold; even a man, than the golden wedge of Ophir, therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.” The events recorded in this, and the subsequent chapters are all posterior to those in the sixth chapter containing the opening of the six seals. The judgment of the sixth seal brought the earthquake—“so mighty an earthquake and so great”—producing convulsions so fearful, as to cause every mountain and island to be removed out of their places; but here the judgment does not end, for it is followed by a universal famine, a total withdrawal of the means of sustenance, from all who are included within the four corners of the earth. In the famine under the third seal, there were mitigating circumstances, a mingling of mercy with judgment, for see, said he, “that thou hurt not the oil and the wine” but no

such alleviations appear in the present heavy visitation. The wind is not to be permitted to blow, and if there be no wind, there can be no rain, and if there be no rain, there can be no vegetation, and consequently no food for man or beast. The supply of water must fail ; the rivers and springs of water are wasted and dried up. Now when scarcity exists in one country, supplies come from another, but then it shall be equally scarce in all lands, and no supplies be procured, although no price would be considered too exorbitant to demand ; it shall be as in the famine in the siege of Samaria, when an asses head was sold for four score pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver, so shall it be in the days of this great famine. Men with famished faces, shall look on each other with envious eye, desiring to fill their bellies with their neighbours flesh. "Give thy Son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to-morrow." All faces shall gather blackness, and every man's heart shall faint. The judgment will not be confined to the land, but will extend also to the sea, the sailing vessels will be all wind bound, and unable to prosecute their voyages ; their provisions will be expended, and no fresh supplies to be obtained from any port ; unless the period of this terrible deprivation was shortened, none could possibly survive, but for the elect's sakes it shall be shortened ; and a certain given portion of that elect shall be wholly exempted from the general calamity, even the hundred and forty and four thousand, who are to form the nucleus of a chosen race, numerous as the stars of heaven, and as the sand of the sea shore for multitude : but those of his people among the Gentiles who come through the miseries of famine, will not be suffered to want — "in the time of famine shall they be satisfied."

“ And I saw another angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God ; and cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them who were sealed, and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

The first object to be attained in thus sealing God's chosen people, is that they may be exempted from the general calamity, that they may have abundant supplies, while all around endure misery and want. An angel is seen ascending from the east ; why from the east, and not from the west, or north, or south ? because in the east, probably, are to be found that chosen remnant, for whose sake the waters of the great river Euphrates are to be dried up, viz., “ that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared.” This chosen remnant, are the literal stock of Israel, the same who appear in the fourteenth chapter, standing with the Lamb on the Mount Zion. “ Though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.” “ The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.” “ Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been like as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah. This remnant, sealed with the seal of the living God, shall be under his special protection and care, protected not only from the present, but from the far more severe and terrible judgments which are to follow. The present judgment of famine has been deferred until the sealing took place, and hereafter we find in

the universality of the judgments, that then are particularly specified as forming exemptions. The number sealed is an hundred and forty and four thousand, being twelve thousand out of each tribe; all specified with such minuteness, as could not warrant or justify any other than a literal interpretation. They are chosen of God that they should be holy and without blame before him in love, and accordingly we find that when at last they do appear before the throne of God, "in their mouth is found no guile, and they are without fault." There is no mention made of any sealing among the Gentiles, but as God has visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name, doubtless, there will at this time be a remnant according to the election of grace, but not sealed so as to be protected from the calamities which will overwhelm the world. Let this fact serve to humble the proud baptized Gentile, who vainly imagines that he occupies the position of the once favoured people. For a season, indeed, he has done so, but the tables are again to be turned, and this is the first outward manifestation of it. The salvation of Israel is shortly to come out of Zion, and "so all Israel shall be saved." In that day Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. The true children of the kingdom were cast out because of unbelief, but not for ever; they shall be reinstated in the favour of God, when they put away the evil heart of unbelief, and so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, "there shall come out of Zion, the deliverer, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob," and then shall "Israel blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." Palestine is peculiarly Emmanuel's land, it is expressly called the land of the Lord, there shall Israel dwell, and from thence his branches shall extend — the first, and the principle nation on the

earth, to whom all other nations shall be tributary. Jerusalem shall be the throne of the Lord, the city of the great king, "the place of his feet, and the place of the soles of his feet, where he will dwell among the children of Israel for ever." "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." "Four angels are mentioned, in allusion to the four spirits of the heavens, in Zechariah vi. 5, and though the earth is not a plain square with angles, but round and globular, yet it is said to have four corners, with respect to the four points of the heavens; and though there is but one wind, yet four are named with regard to the above points, east, west, north, and south, from whence it blows." "The winds being held back, no rain would fall upon the earth, and all nature would wither and die."

"And I saw another angel ascending out of the east."

"This other angel probably is Christ himself, who is spoken of as a mighty angel in chap. x. 1, and the angel of God's presence (Isa. lxiii. 9.); and is called by way of eminence, his angel that bears his name, and the angel or messenger of the covenant, and who rose as the Sun of Righteousness and the Dayspring from on high, and came from Judea, the eastern part of the Roman Empire. He appeared with an eminent ensign of honour, as having the seal of the living God upon himself, with power to seal his servants; and spoke with the authority of God in commanding the other four angels to refrain from execution of judgments, until he had done this important work in behalf of the servants of God. Christ is the head and

lord of angels, and is himself sealed by God the Father, and he only, with the Father and Spirit, knows his sheep, or those that are his, and so he only had a certain knowledge of them, and power and authority to seal them, whereby he marks, distinguishes, and secures them to the day of redemption." The impress of God being affixed, they would now be exempted, not only from the present judgment, but from those which were to follow by the seven trumpets under the seventh seal. This sealing will take place after their national return to Canaan, for at that time the Temple is restored, and the ordinances of worship set up, as prescribed in the law of Moses, for they do return to their own land conformably with the promise given to them. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of the north, and from all lands whither he had driven them; and I will bring them again into the land that I gave unto their fathers." The return of the children of Israel will be by different migrations. The first may be induced thither, probably under the protection of the principal European governments. Many who have been looking forward with hope to the land of their ancestors, upon which such a profusion of promises rest, may in smaller groups and bands betake themselves hither, but probably not until the final judgments have deteriorated and impoverished the countries, so as to destroy the expectation of continued gain by commercial pursuits, will they betake themselves in great numbers to their own land. As the population increases, the greater will be the inducement to go thither. The spirit of the holy prophets will again be resuscitated in the breasts of a chosen

few, even the hundred and forty and four thousand who are now being sealed. They shall prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy, and will seek the good of Jerusalem, because of the Lord their God; but at the time of this sealing, Israel will be as a nation and people still alienated from God, and enemies in their minds by wicked works, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. In the time of Antichrist, the Jews will form an alliance with him, hoping thereby to escape the calamities which will be caused by this scourge of the whole earth; but "their covenant with death shall be disannulled, their agreement with hell shall not stand." When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, they shall be trodden down by it, and thus once more, and for the last time, Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. (See 11th chapter.) The highways shall lie waste, and the wayfaring man shall cease, "for the Lord will make a consumption even determined in the midst of all the land." When the decreed consumption has been accomplished, then the remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. This remnant are sealed of God before the judgments commence. Those that are past, and which are called the beginnings of sorrows, they have shared, for these were but the preliminaries of judgments, the first droppings of the shower; but now that the day of wrath has come, these, the servants of the living God, important, not on their own account only, but because they are to form the nucleus of a chosen race unto God and the Lamb, the first fruits of a people, spreading out into a multitude of nations, who, by the peculiar covenant then to be made with them, will be guarded, defended, protected, and preserved for ever from again breaking out into rebellion against God. This covenant, expressed in Jeremiah xxxi. 31-37, is not the

covenant made with Abraham, in which latter, both Jew and Gentile participated, but it is exclusively for the house of Israel, "for this is the covenant which I will make with them," (as quoted by St. Paul,) "when I shall take away their sins, and so all Israel shall be saved ; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." When the sealing takes place, the twelve tribes are restored, and most probably have taken possession of the respective portions of territory assigned to each tribe. Possibly at this early stage of their restoration to Palestine, they may not, i.e., such as have returned, number more than three times the number who are sealed. "For it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord two parts, therein shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left therein, and I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say it is my people ; and they shall say, the Lord is my God." This third part, in the heat of the persecution of Antichrist, will, under the conduct of two great leaders, betake themselves to a "place prepared by God," to return with triumph and everlasting joy upon their heads, and then will be said, "open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth, may enter in." At present the prediction is fulfilled, for the "worst of the heathen" occupy the land which the Lord gave to Israel for an inheritance, but by some striking intervention of providence the country shall be repossessed by her own children, a little previous to the commencement of the troublous times, for "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." One week only of years have to run, from the date of the sealing of

the twelve tribes, until the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. The half of this week being three years and a half; commences with the opening of the seventh seal, and terminates with the judgment of the sixth trumpet, being the second woe. Two years of this period will be occupied with the judgments of the four first trumpets, five months with the fifth, and thirteen months with the sixth, making up the required period. The remaining three years and a half, or the half week of years, will be allowed for the absolute and universal empire of Antichrist, the man of sin, who, after that short period has been completed, shall be visited with judgments thick, and fast as hail, awfully increased in severity, being the "last vials" in which are filled up the wrath of God upon the earth. Five of these vials will be poured out in quick succession. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since men were upon the earth," no; nor ever shall be, and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake the days shall be shortened. Succeeding to the judgments of the five vials will follow an interval of about six weeks, just sufficiently long to enable the guilty world somewhat to recover from the terrible effects of God's visitation, and to be marshalled in haste at the command of Antichrist, the universal monarch, on the great plain of Esdraelon, to fight against the Lord and his anointed. "Then the heathen shall rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth shall set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us; but he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision, then shall he speak unto them

in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." Such is a simple outline of the great subject before us. May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who giveth power to the faint, and knowledge to the simple, endow us with grace, that the great truths developed in this sacred book may be brought out in all clearness, in simplicity and godly sincerity, and so as the "wise may understand," and be prepared with oil in their vessels, and their lamps trimmed and burning, when the midnight cry goes forth, "behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. The night is now very far spent, and the day is at hand," but until the beginnings of sorrows by the judgment of the second seal take place, none can predicate the end, or fix the date of his coming. The decisive mark of its approach will be the fourth and sixth seal, in the former by the death of three hundred millions of people, and in the other, by an earthquake, unprecedented in the history of the world. Then let the righteous lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh. Then each event will be watched by the "wise," with which indeed they will be acquainted before it comes to pass, by means of this blessed book, in which the events recorded will be literally fulfilled, and not one of them wanting. Each judgment in succession, following in the order laid down, will be more and more confirmatory to the people of God, and their spiritual strength will increase, the nearer they find themselves approaching that glorious morning, when they shall see the king in his beauty, and behold the land which is very far off. It is at the time of the sealing of the hundred and forty and four thousand that these words in Daniel have their accomplishment—"and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." This is the week already referred to, in the midst of which the sacrifice and

oblation is made to cease, and the short reign of terror and blasphemy, under the personal Antichrist, takes place, followed by the great tribulation, "for in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation, and the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them." This covenant, to be confirmed with many, is the covenant made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed to Jacob by a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, "to thee will I give the land of Canaan." It is the same with the holy covenant against which Antichrist hath indignation; he has intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant, and forms with them a league and counter-covenant, called in Isaiah "a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell;" but the sealed ones do not forsake the holy covenant, but continue unshaken in their confidence, even "when the waters had overwhelmed them, and the stream had gone over their soul." When the proud waters had gone over their soul; they went through fire and through water, but at last are brought unto a wealthy place. "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise." But how is this wonderful change effected in a portion of the house of Israel, who have hitherto refused to acknowledge him, and upon whose hearts the veil has so long been spread? It is effected through the instrumentality of Elijah. "Behold I send my messenger before my face, and he shall prepare my way before me." The words which were true of John the Baptist, will receive an equally full accomplishment in the true Elias, who shall then appear among men—"prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God"—"he shall come and restore all things,,

i.e., all the Jewish ordinances, feasts, and laws, as given by their law-giver, Moses. All these shall by him be restored, "and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, reconciling all their differences, bringing them into harmony with each other, and into peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Conjoined with him will be another mysterious personage, referred to in Zechariah, and in the 11th chapter of this book, concerning whom it is not yet the time to speak. But these divinely ordained ministers are mainly instrumental in this mighty transformation of character in a portion of Abraham's literal descendants, who are sealed with the seal of the living God, and are from the date of their sealing exempted from the judgments with which the nations of the earth are visited. This exemption is particularly referred to in the judgments of the fifth and sixth trumpet, where the inflictions are fearfully augmented by heavy bodily chastisements. The sealed ones are hid in God's pavilion until the calamities be overpast. A thousand may fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand, but it shall not come nigh them, for his angels shall have charge concerning them. Only with their eyes they shall behold and see the reward of the wicked. They shall be eye-witnesses of sights more dreadful than has ever yet been seen in this world of sin and sorrow, but God will keep them in perfect peace, because their minds are stayed on him. This sealing takes place before the judgments begin, for as the Lord could do nothing until Lot, the one solitary righteous man, was removed out of danger, so now it is commanded to hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. There is also a parallel case to this,

when the Lord was about to execute judgments on idolatrous Israel; it was commanded to set a mark upon the people that feared him, and called upon his name, thus making a gracious provision for the safety of those who were precious in his sight. "Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And behold six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter-weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed in linen, who had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him, through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men, which were before the house. And he said unto them, defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth and slew in the city. And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left [*said Ezekiel*] that I fell upon my face and cried, and said, ah Lord God! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? Then said he unto me, the iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah, is exced-

ing great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness : for they say, the Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not. And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity ; but I will recompense their way upon their head. And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me." It has been deemed well to transcribe entire this striking portion of Scripture from the 9th of Ezekiel, in illustration of the sealing with which we are now concerned, and because it powerfully sets forth the principles upon which Jehovah acts in his dealing with mankind. A series of judgments are now to begin, which have no parallel in any previous sufferings endured by sinning men ; it is therefore important to understand the reason of such terrible inflictions. The accumulated guilt of ages also will be heaped on the closing generation—even all the righteous blood which has been shed from the beginning of the world to the last saint who shall suffer martyrdom at the hand of Antichrist. The iniquities of the fathers shall be visited upon the children, but the sealed of God escape those things which come to pass upon the world. After their sealing, a scene is introduced which properly applies to subsequent events (although for wise reasons introduced here), and therefore the consideration of them shall be postponed until they come in the order of their fulfilment : for the same reason also, after the 8th chapter is concluded, the same attention to the course of fulfilment will lead to a considerable deviation from the course of narration as given by the apostle.

THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH S E A L.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half-an-hour.

2. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God ; and to them were given seven trumpets.

3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censor ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints' ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5. And the angel took the censor, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it unto the earth : and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

7. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth ; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea ; and the third part of the sea became blood ;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters ;

11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood : and the third part of the waters became wormwood ; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.


12. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars ; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound !

“ And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”

The first seal brought upon the stage the Lord Jesus ; who, as a mighty prince, about to conflict with enemies over whom he is assured of victory, goes forth “ conquering and to conquer : ” he comes to take possession of his throne, but the nations who had sent after him a message, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us, and are now in violent hostility to him and his government, have to be subdued under him, and this is accomplished by judgment after judgment, increasing in severity, until the nations are broken as with a rod of iron, and dashed in pieces as a potter's vessel. This series of judgments begins with the opening of the second seal, which brings

iversal war, and is followed by the third seal, with
mine; the fourth with war, famine, and pestilence
mbined. The opening of the fifth seal reveals the
y of the martyr's of Jesus for vengeance on them
at dwell on the earth; which they shall have, when
eir brethren, who are yet in the world, have in like
anner suffered martyrdom, and been numbered with
em. The removing of the sixth seal is followed by
e great earthquake, and succeeded by a second and
ore terrible famine than the one under the third
al. The seventh seal differs from the preceding,
asmuch as it does not bring any one particular
lamity, but discloses a new and more terrible array
judgments at the sound of trumpets, by angels set
art for that purpose. The book, sealed with seven
als, will be opened and unsealed, when the disclo-
res under this seal are made known. The contents,
written within, will then have been unfolded.
hen the first four seals were opened, attention was
manded in a voice of thunder by each of the four
erubim, and attention was given, but to the opening
this seal there is more than attention, there is great
nder, mingled with awe—an awestruck silence,
breathless attention—producing an involuntary
ence in heaven for about the space of half an hour.
is not a commanded silence, it is not like an act
on a stage, where the performers have each their
rt. In heaven there are no make-believes, all is
ality and truth. The duration of this silence ap-
ared in the vision to be about the space of half an
ur, nor is there any reason why the period should
t be literally thus understood; and what was it
ich produced this simultaneous act of silent wonder
d awe amongst the inhabitants of heaven? It was
development made by the Almighty of a new and
ribble mode of procedure in his judgments on man-



kind, and which are more especially unfolded in the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets. The three-fold form of judgment, the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, had been of frequent occurrence. The angels of God had also been witnesses to the divine power in the multiplied inflictions upon Egypt, some of which are now to be re-enacted, but in addition to which they now behold a vision of terrors without any parallel in the previous history of the world, for hell itself is now to be opened, and its legions let loose to torment and destroy the human race. They look on the terrible scene, and are dumb with silence, but the universal feeling which pervades the great assembly finds expression thus : "even so Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." The seal is opened, and the ministers of his vengeance stand forth.

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God ; and to them were given seven trumpets."

These are set apart by themselves, and have the honour of standing before God to execute his high behests. The seventh angel, who sounds the last trumpet, is Christ himself. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God," "for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." The other angels are those, concerning whom, he is not ashamed to call them brethren. The nearer the throne, the higher the dignity. In the midst of the throne is the Lamb, who is pre-eminently the highest ; next are the four seraphim or cherubim, and immediately around the throne are the four and twenty elders, and now standing before him, and ready to act as

his ministers of vengeance, are the seven angels, while the high praises of God are in their mouth—as the angels appointed to pour out the vials of his wrath are the spirits of just men made perfect—so now are those also partakers of the human name, for this honour shall be conferred upon his saints; while the angels who are not of our nature, stand by, and are witnesses, adoring him who thus makes manifest his righteous judgments. To the seven angels are given seven trumpets, that each should sound in succession, and be followed by inflictions of punishment, from the first, onward to the seventh, which is the trumpet of the archangel, when “The Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots as a whirlwind to render his anger with his fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire; for by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord will be many.” The few that remain upon the earth will be like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done. Before the judgment begins, a preliminary act of worship takes place, and the time has at length arrived when “God shall avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him.”

“And another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden censor; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.”

This is the first mention of the altar in heaven, but the pattern shown to Moses in the Mount was the pattern of things in the heavens, and of these the altar occupies a conspicuous place. The altar

erected by Moses, on which to burn incense, "was made of Shittim wood, a cubit the length, and a cubit the breadth—four square—and two cubits the height, overlaid with pure gold, with a crown of gold round about, and placed before the veil, that is by the ark of the testimony before the mercy seat that is over the testimony 'where I will meet with thee.' And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning. When he dresseth the lamps he shall burn incense upon it, and when he lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord, throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat-offering, neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year, with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations; it is most holy unto the Lord." The angel who came and stood at the altar, is of the "royal priesthood," is of those whom he loved and washed from their sins in his own blood, and hath made them kings and priests unto God and his Father. The censer is the sacred vessel on which the incense is placed. The incense which God instructed Moses to make or to compound, consisted "of sweet spices, stacte and onycha, and galbanum:" these sweet spices, with pure frankincense, consisting of equal proportions, "and thou shalt make it a perfume, a confectio after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy; and thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee; it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof; it shall

be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people. This incense of the purest fragrance symbolised the holy offering of the life and death of the Son of God, as the head and representative of the human race. All prayers coming up before God are acceptable only as mingled with this pure incense, "the righteousness of Christ." The prayer of truth, blended with this holy incense is ever acceptable to God. The prayer of Christ is also the incense, for he thus speaks in the Psalms—"Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." On this great occasion there was much incense given unto the angel, that he might offer it with the prayers, the combined prayers of all the saints of God, who had unremittingly supplicated for vengeance on the heads of the wicked.

"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

An act of holy worship is performed in heaven. The one united cry of the church invisible ascends up before God, through Jesus Christ. The long-suffering of God, which had so long restrained him, which had made him "bear long with them," even with them who had cried for vengeance, is at length to cease, and the risings up of that vengeance, which is to consume a guilty world, begin to bestir themselves from the depths of his soul. The fragrance of the incense, and the prayers of the saints together, ascended up before God, out from the censer in the hand of his angel priest; and the time for action had come, for it is added,

“ And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth ; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”

The censer which had contained the incense is now filled with the sacred fire, the same which consumed the presumptuous men who offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, viz., the two hundred and fifty men, even the two princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, who were men of renown. It was the same fire also with which the high priest entered in once in the year into the most holy place. “ And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hand full of sweet incense, beaten small, and bring it within the veil ; and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.” When it touched the lips of Isaiah, his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged. It is the symbol of love, which is the divine nature, as hence it is written, “ who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire ? Who among us shall dwell with the “ everlasting burnings ? ” &c. &c. This fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is : thus, “ who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and shall purify the son’s of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” This fire, cast into the earth, indicates indignation and wrath, and is followed by voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, all premonitory of vengeance ; for rejected love burns like fire. God’s

love being despised, is the fire of his jealousy, by which all the earth is to be devoured, and shall burn that none can quench it. This combination of sounds and sights, terminating with an earthquake, will no doubt form part of those "fearful sights and great signs from heaven," which are to precede the great day; for although that day will come on the world as unexpectedly "as did the flood on the world of the ungodly," it will not be from want of warning indications, loud and oft repeated, but "none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

All things are now ready, and God's strange work of judgment is about to begin. God has spoken the word and he will not turn from it. "The whole earth shall be made desolate, and the cities be laid waste, without an inhabitant." The angels prepare themselves to sound, by arming themselves with the same mind, i. e., being imbued with the same horror of sin, and with full acquiescence in God's judgments which follow on the blast of their several trumpets. They prepared themselves to sound: their action was voluntary, they entered into the mind of him whose ministers of vengeance they were now to be, and proceed to give the required signal for doom. The trumpets do not sound simultaneously, but in succession, and after intervals, some shorter and some longer, but extending in all over a period of rather more than seven years. The judgments however follow immediately upon their respective blasts, and as we know that the last or seventh trumpet "shall sound" so as to be heard over the whole earth, so will the sounding of the other trumpets be made to

reverberate through all lands. The angels shall sound, and their sounds shall be heard by human ears, "but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he spake by his servants the prophets." When the Apostle Paul says that "the trumpet shall sound," he does not mean a figure of speech, but a reality, obvious to the sense of man. The prolonged sound will be heard as the voice of a new and terrible thunder, and will no doubt be productive, for the moment, of fright and consternation, but soon will be accounted for as some unusual and extraordinary phenomenon in the atmosphere, and not as the warning voice of God : but as the curtain rises when the bell rings, so the echoes of the sound shall scarcely have died away until the work of judgment commence.

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail, and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth ; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

This is the first trumpet, and the judgment which follows is the least severe, and yet how terrible ! and how different in its nature from all that went before. The judgments hitherto had been war, famine, pestilence, and earthquake, but now a new series of inflictions, of a still more direct character, are to be the lot of men. "Upon the wicked he will rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup." What God has done literally upon the earth in former times, why should it be deemed incredible that he will literally do again. When God destroyed the cities of the

plain it was by fire. "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." This judgment seems to be directed to the destruction of the means of subsistence ; that which grows upon the ground, rather than to the persons of men ; yet what horrors must result from a vast and continued shower of hail, and fire mingled with hail, upon the earth. What destruction of life and property ! The plagues which fell on Egypt are typical of the last judgments, and so it is written that "God caused it to rain upon Egypt a very grievous hail." The Lord said unto Moses, "stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven ; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground ; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast ; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field." This passage is given at length, because it corresponds in manner and in degree also to the judgment preceding from the first trumpet, and as the infliction on Egypt was literal, so shall there be a literal infliction in the day that is approaching on the whole earth ; for a third part of the trees in every country will be consumed by fire, and all the grass upon the earth shall be burnt up. In the following year the grass will again appear, and the fields be

covered with foliage, but the trees will not re-appear except as shrubs, for many years would be required to replace them, and before that time, the earth, with all its inhabitants, will be dissolved, and the countries made desolate. Thus, then, in the rapid passage of the flames over mountains, hills, and valleys, two thirds of the trees planted shall escape the devastation, but the fire, as it runs along upon the ground, will consume every blade of grass in its passage; and as it was in Egypt, so shall it be in that day on the whole earth, destroying in its progress all that is in the field, both man and beast. "For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through them; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled, they are gone." The fiery hail which the Lord sent upon the Egyptians was preceded and accompanied by thunderings, as appears from the words of Pharaoh, "intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail." So will this awful series of judgments be preceded by voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquake, which will be seen and felt upon the earth, and as then, in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail, so now will the sealed remnant be exempted from the judgments falling on the nations around them. It would seem as if by miraculous interposition that the cities of the Egyptians, if they did not entirely escape the fiery tempest, were so far protected from its violence, that themselves, and their cattle, once housed, were comparatively secure, and so shall it be with the antitype. Within doors there will be shelter and safety, while beholding the fiery scourge as it passes along with fearful rapidity; with

the earth as the garden of Eden before it, and behind it a desolate wilderness. The calamity will be universal. "On all heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off. In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth ; on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly," "for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing." This first judgment is of sufficient magnitude to awaken repentance, and to bring the nations to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, but still they hold fast deceit, and refuse to return. "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright, no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle." When a few weeks have passed, people will begin to look about them, and to make the best of the painful circumstances in which they are placed, few attributing their late calamity to its true cause, but hardening themselves more and more in crime. A few months, and vegetation will begin to reappear, and the fields again to look green, and the hopes of the people to revive ; probably from four to five months will elapse : when the earth will again tremble violently, the lightnings will flash, and terrible sounds will be heard, as when the Almighty caused his glorious voice to be heard in the wilderness. Fearful indications will precede each judgment, for during the continuance of the whole of this day of wrath, fearful sights and great signs shall be from heaven. Again the trumpet sounds, and probably with increased power falls upon the terror-stricken inhabitants of the earth.

"The second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire, was cast

into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood, and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."


It must be remembered that this book consists of a series of visions, resembling a continued living panorama presented in succession to the eye of the prophet; while he wrote down those things which he saw. They were images or life-like representations, such as only God can give of realities which were to be hereafter. When the second angel sounded, the first thing thereafter which attracted his attention, was the sudden appearance and descent from heaven of a mighty mass of flame, resembling as it appeared to him, a great mountain burning with fire, which being precipitated into the sea, a fearful change took place in the nature of that element, insomuch that the third part of the vast mass of waters became blood. There may be no more connection between the fire which was cast into the sea, with the change which took place in that element, than there was between the lifting up of Aaron's rod, and the judgments which followed. It pleased God that before the infliction came, the rod should be lifted up, and so in like manner it may please him that the visible descent in the eyes of men, of a mighty ball of fire upon the sea, should be the ensign or signal of the calamity about to follow. The type of this great judgment was also among the number of the plagues of Egypt. "The Lord spake unto Moses, say unto Aaron, take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood, and that

there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded, and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants, and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood, and the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river, and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the river, and seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river." What God did to the Egyptians as a nation, God will do to the nations of the earth; he will turn their waters into blood, partially under this second trumpet, but fully under the second and third vials, when the whole ocean shall become as the blood of a dead man, and every stream and spring shall literally be changed from water into stagnant blood. As yet, however, the judgments have not reached to this terrible severity; the present, involving the transition of only a third part of the ocean into blood; but in what parts of the ocean this transition occurs, death will be the inevitable consequence to those who navigate the waters; for "the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed." What a terrible calamity to maritime nations, whose wealth and greatness are so dependant on their shipping! what fearful destruction of human life, in the loss of the lives of the crews of thousands of vessels; what pestilential vapours must ascend upward to the clouds by the changed element—gross vapours—fatal to all who inhale them.


“ And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters ; and the name of the star is called wormwood, and the third part of the waters became wormwood ; and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter.”

By the present calamity men are deprived of an essential element of life, viz., water, that element being so changed as to be unfit either to drink, or for culinary purposes, and if under the influence of intense thirst, resorted to, instead of quenching, increases the thirst until death, terminates their sufferings. A writer on this subject observes, “ that a good supply of fresh water is one of the greatest blessings which can be conferred on mankind. Water is in point of fact the grand restorative of health and vigour to all kinds of life ; without it, vegetation droops and withers, and deprived of it, animated nature sinks and dies. Water, like air, is so common, that we are prone to forget its real importance, only when the want of it is felt do we begin to estimate its actual value.” How pathetically does the prophet speak of the famine arising from the want of water. “ Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish ; they are black unto the ground ; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up. And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters ; they came to the pits, and found no water ; they returned with their vessels empty ; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads. Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads. Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook it, because there

no grass. And the wild asses did stand in the places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons ; eyes did fail because there was no grass." The Christians could not drink of the waters because they turned into blood. Now the third part of the seas, and streams, and fountains of waters, are for a season to be changed into wormwood, a liquid as to the smell, and most bitter to the taste. The people refuse to drink, but the overwhelming power of thirst compels them to take it for momentary relief, and the consequence said to result, is "that many men died of the waters because they were made bitter;" many hundreds, many thousands, perhaps millions, for how could so widespread a calamity be otherwise than fatal to multitudes, rich and poor, young and old together. This mode of punishment is unique in the history of God's judgments, for compared with Israel of old. "Because they have broken my law, saith the Lord, which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein ; but have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers hated them. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel ; Behold I will feed them, I will give them wormwood, and give them a draught of gall to drink." If God thus afflicted Israel, a people near to him, a people chosen out from the nations, to be to him a peculiar people above all nations, so will he punish the Gentiles, when by their continued rebellion they provoke him to anger. A great calamity is produced by the falling of a star from heaven. This star is one of the fallen angels. He is described as "a star falling from heaven burning as it were a lamp." The angels of heaven are called the morning stars, who sang together, and the sons of God who shouted for joy,



when the foundations of the earth were laid. A large portion of them (not fewer than a third of the whole) did not abide in their first estate, but left their own habitation ; these are the host of the high ones, which are on high, which are to be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shut up in prison when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously ; as yet they have access to heavenly places, and are occasionally employed by God in the execution of his purposes, as in the case of the lying spirit in the mouths of the prophets of Ahab king of Israel. One of such is employed in the bringing in of this judgment, and a host of them will be employed in the judgments which are about to follow ; these are the fallen sons of God, no longer recognized as sons ; the lost children of the skies still running hither and thither, as Satan “going to and fro in the earth, and wandering up and down in it,” willing to be employed at any work by which their deep seated hatred to mankind can be gratified. With what readiness did Satan act, upon permission being given him, in the case of Job ; destroying his property, immolating his children, and inflicting on himself intense bodily suffering, so as to render him unrecognisable by his friends, when they came to visit and to condole with him. One of those fallen angels is now employed to execute the judgment of this third trumpet : “there fell a great star from heaven ; not a burning and shining light, but burning with the dim light of a lamp, and designated by the name of the peculiar infliction which he was commissioned to work upon the earth. Possibly this judgment would be protracted for some months, and not be confined to one particular quarter of the world, but be made to visit in alternate succession the four quarters of the earth,



that all may in turn share in the punishment sent by heaven. At length the nauseous and bitter waters again become limpid, and the now coveted blessing of pure water is welcomed to the rivers, to the springs, to the homes and hearths of men ; but with the renewal of the blessing comes no acknowledgment of him who is the giver. Three of the angels out of the seven who stand before God, and to whom had been given seven trumpets, have now emitted their great blasts with their respective trumpets, and have in each case been followed by heavy judgments. The next which is to follow is more in the form of a sign from heaven to indicate that vengeance of a far more fearful nature is about to come.

“The fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars ; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.”

A partial withdrawment of light from the earth, not in the form of an eclipse or succession of eclipses, but in actual darkness in those hours of the day, when according to the course of nature there ought to be light, and total darkness during a considerable portion of the night ; an inexplicable phenomenon to those who would endeavour to account for it by natural causes. There are in the history of the past only two cases bearing any resemblance. The first with the Egyptians, when Moses was commanded to stretch out his hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt ; and Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and

there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days ; they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days, but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. The other case of palpable darkness continued only for the fourth part of a day. "It was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour." The sun shines upon the earth when the face of the earth is towards the sun, but God can miraculously interpose thick clouds, or otherwise prevent the rays of light from falling upon the earth—"clouds and darkness are round about him." The effect of this fearful phenomenon must be to derange the whole course of animated nature, and sensibly injure all vegetable productions ; interrupting and deranging also the course of human affairs. Now we are approaching a state of matters to which there are no parallels in the past, and where the business of life, from the highest to the lowest, will be entirely suspended. We approach new and unheard-of judgments—judgments such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the mind of man conceived ;" miseries more resembling what will be endured when men are placed wholly and without reserve in the power of the prince of darkness and his myriads of fallen agents. The sounding of the fourth trumpet, and the darkness which follows, has an awfully significant aspect. It is the God of nature himself, speaking in silent, but unmistakeable language ; that there is impending wrath ; and now men's hearts still more are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and the sun shall not give her light.

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud

voice, woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound."

The past sufferings were as nothing compared with those now to be inflicted under these three woes. O that men would understand that rebellion against the most high, if continued unrepented of, must ever be followed by mourning, lamentation, and woe; then shall it be said, "let the day perish wherein I was born." Better indeed shall it be for that "generation that the light of day had never dawned upon it," for then, "blessed shall be the barren that bare not, and the paps which never gave suck." The first woe will be attended with torment; without the alleviation of death, for men shall "seek death and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." The second woe will bring with it (within the short period of thirteen months), the destruction of a third part of the human race, and the last and final woe will consist of the pouring out of the vials, in which will be filled up the wrath of God. Between the second and third woe there will be an interval of three years and a half, being the brief period allotted for the universal dominion of Anti-christ. Thereafter, in one single month of thirty days, will the first five vials be poured out, each following the other with fearful rapidity, and all existing at one and the same time, forming together a combination of torments so great and fearful that unless the Lord should shorten those days no flesh would be saved; "but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Then another short interval of forty-five days will take place, during which "the way of the kings of the east will be prepared," and the nations be gathered

together to the great vale of Esdraelon, previous to the Battle of Armageddon. At the close of this short interval also will take place the resurrection of the righteous dead, and the change of the living; when two men shall be sleeping in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other left, and two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left; caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord; "then shall that day come which shall burn as an oven, and all the proud and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." The woes are pronounced, the fifth angel is about to sound, and now will be realized heavy judgments, for the bottomless pit shall be opened.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET.

CHAPTER IX.

1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth : and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2. And he opened the bottomless pit ; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace ; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth ; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree ; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months ; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle ; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

8. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

9. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron ; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails, and their power was to hurt men five months.

11. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

12. One woe is past ; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

13. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14. Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, to slay the third part of men.

16. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand : and I heard the number of them.

17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone ; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions ; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

18. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails ; for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood ; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk ;

21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts.

“ And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth ; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.”

God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in divers manners, and by various agents, accomplished his judgments on men ; but the final and crowning inflictions will be by the hands of his Son. He acts sometimes by the ministry of holy angels, as when “ the angel of God smote Herod, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the Ghost ;” by angels also the cities of the plain were involved in conflagration, for the Lord had commanded two angels to destroy it. Sometimes by the agency of the spirits of just men made perfect, to whom the pouring out of the vials of his wrath shall be entrusted, and sometimes by the instrumentality of fallen angels, as in the terrible judgment under this trumpet. As the devil has been the successful tempter and seducer of mankind, so has he and his myrmidons been suffered of God oftentimes to be the tormentors of men, sometimes singly, sometimes in clusters of seven, sometimes in legions, and as at the present and following trumpet, in still greater numbers ; indeed, all disease proceeds from the devil. The cures effected by our Lord were

from sufferings caused by Satan. "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." Thus he spoke of the woman bowed down, who in no wise could lift up herself, "ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound to these eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day." Still in all these cases the agency itself has been invisible, the spirits themselves have not been seen, but now the case is to be altered, and the demons let loose upon mankind are by divine command, and by divine power, to assume a visible shape, so that men will not only be subjected to intolerable sufferings, but also see with their eyes the fearful beings from whom those inflictions proceed. The key of the bottomless pit is placed in the hands of one of those ministers of darkness; who, instantly on receiving his commission, lets himself down like lightning falling from heaven, to the place of the entrance of this fearful cavern. There may be more entrances than one; but the preponderance of Scripture testimony would lead to the conviction that there is only one: thus it is said that hell hath opened her mouth, and enlarged herself without measure, not many mouths but one mouth, and again, "for Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it." And again, when satan is cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up in that prison house, a seal is impressed upon the entrance. It is called a pit, because the light of day never shines into it, it is a pit of great magnitude occupying the entire cavity of the globe, and is God's great prison house, wherein shall be engulfed all the nations that forget God. This fearful cavern is called the bottomless pit, from the circumstance of the earth's

unceasing rotatory movement, nobody falling into it can ever reach a bottom in consequence of the diurnal revolution of the earth. There is no other way of accounting for the pit being bottomless, for otherwise a descending body must at sometime reach a base ; but from this cause it is a perpetual descent, sometimes with greater and sometimes with lesser velocity, ever going down ; a depth without a bottom ; neither being in it, is it possible to emerge from it, but by the fiat of him at whose word the sun stood still in Gibeon, and 'the moon in the valley of Ajalon. By the same word shall the earth on this occasion suspend its movement to admit of its being opened, and emerging therefrom a host of demons for the purpose of inflicting torment on the human race.

“ And he opened the bottomless pit ; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace ; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.”

It is well known that not many miles below the surface of the earth, the heat is greatly intensified, until it becomes a sheet of fiery flame. If then an opening of any considerable dimensions were made into its depths, the consequence would be just what is here represented, viz., the rising up of the smoke as it were of a great furnace, and if this opening should continue for any length of time, the sun and the air for hundreds of miles would be darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit, and as it will on this occasion continue open for a period of five months, issuing forth at every moment vast volumes of smoke, the whole atmosphere, to its remotest bounds, will be impregnated with its vapours, and spread universal

darkness over all countries, with perhaps sufficient light as to make the darkness visible, and at the sametime add to the horror of the situation when peopled by millions of tormentors let loose for a season from their prison house for the purpose of tormenting men.

“ And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth ; and to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.”

The demons are designated by the name of locusts. It is not unusual in Scripture to give to men or to angels the names of animals to which their characters bear resemblance, thus unfaithful shepherds are called sleeping dogs, loving to slumber, who will not bark to give warning of the enemy's approach. The people of Christ are called his sheep, and their enemies wolves. The men who surrounded the cross at our Lord's crucifixion are designated bulls and dogs. “ Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round, they gaped upon me with their mouth as a ravening and a roaring lion.” “ Dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet.” “ Save me from the lion's mouth, for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.” The devil himself is designated the great dragon, and “ that old serpent called the devil and satan.” It is not therefore doing violence to the literal interpretation of this book to maintain that those are spirits thus coming up out of the pit, although named locusts, because like them they are messengers of evil to men, and like them they bring desolation and misery in their train, but with this great difference, that whereas the locusts destroy the means of human subsistence, to these are given power as the scorpions of the earth

have power. They may also be termed locusts from their vast and overpowering multitude, and from their proceeding together in myriads to the work assigned them. The power given them is power to inflict pain as of the pain of a scorpion when he striketh a man. A celebrated writer on natural history has observed with regard to scorpions that "of all insects without wings which are obnoxious to man, there are none so terrible as the scorpion, whose shape is hideous, whose size among the insect tribe is enormous, and whose sting is generally fatal. In Europe, it is seldom observed to grow above four inches, but in warm tropical climates it is often seen a foot in length. It is not less terrible from its size than its malignity. It resembles a lobster somewhat in shape, but is infinitely more hideous, its belly is divided into seven little rings, from the lowest of which is continued a tail composed of six joints, which are bristly, and formed like little globes, the last being armed with a crooked sting. This is that fatal instrument which renders this insect so formidable, it is long, pointed, hard, and hollow, it is pierced near the base by two small holes, through which, when the animal stings, it ejects a drop of poison, which is white, caustic, and fatal. The reservoir in which the poison is kept is in a small bladder near the tail, into which the venom is distilled by a peculiar apparatus; if this bladder be greatly pressed, the venom will be seen issuing out through the two holes above mentioned, so that it appears that when the animal stings the bladder is pressed, and the venom issues through the two apertures into the wound. There are few animals more formidable or more truly mischievous than the scorpion, as it takes refuge in a small place, and is generally found sheltering in houses, so it frequently stings those among whom it resides. It is

one of the greatest pests that torment mankind, but its malignity in Europe is trifling as compared to what the natives of Africa and the east are known to experience ; their sting in those climates is inevitably fatal. In Europe, where they do not grow to such a size, it is seldom fatal, but the wound produces painful tumours, and frequently great inflammation over all the body ; sickness and vomiting, followed by convulsions, and unless speedily relieved, the wound becomes fatal." Some idea may thus be formed of the kind of torment which will be inflicted on mankind, without distinction of age or sex, excepting only the little band who are sealed with the seal of God ; the sun and the air will be darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. Out of this murky atmosphere will proceed these terrible creatures, descending by myriads upon countries, cities, towns, villages, and hamlets, the only indication of their approach being the sound of their wings, heard in the distance as the sound of chariots of many horses rushing to battle.

“ And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree ; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months ; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.”

Of the plague of locusts sent upon Egypt, it was said, “ they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth, and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth to you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which

groweth for you out of the field, and they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians, which neither they, nor their fathers, nor their father's fathers have seen since the day that they were upon the earth until this day." Such was the plague that devastated Egypt, but it was mild as compared with this terrible scourge, for the commission is "to hurt not the grass of the earth, but only those men which have not the seal of God on their foreheads; not to the extent of death," yet to cause excruciating and insufferable torments; evil spirits shall be allowed to run riot in the earth, and to inflict grievous and horrible suffering on mankind for a period of five months, or a hundred and fifty days and nights. Men shall be subject to the hourly visitation by day and by night, of beings visible to the eye; of hideous shapes, full of malignity, and possessed of power to gratify it.

"And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

What must be the endurance of the sufferers when death itself is solicited, but in vain, as a refuge from the extremity of their misery and anguish.

"And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses

rushing to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months."

The sight of such horrible monsters will be dreadful, having faces as of intelligent men, masculine, and yet feminine in the long flowing robes of hair behind, fierce as lions, swift as eagles in their flight, and to complete the monstrosity, with tails like unto scorpions, and as scorpions are ever striking their tails that they may loose no opportunity of doing evil, so will these enemies of mankind make the most of their allotted time in inflicting and distressing men beyond all endurance, for they shall desire to die, but death shall flee from them.

"And they had a king over them, who is the angel of the bottomless pit whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."

That the agents here employed for the punishment of men are demons, is placed beyond doubt by the circumstance that their leader is the "destroyer," the angel of the bottomless pit: his name being given, seems intended to make us understand who those locusts are, they are demons, not in human shape, but in visible forms horrible to behold. Hitherto demoniac power hath been exerted over men invisibly, but now to add to the poignancy of the sufferings, the tormentors will be visible to the eyes of men in hideous and horrible shapes. These spirits, in countless multitudes, headed up by their angel or leader, Apollyon, and marshalled by him into separate bands or armies, will be assigned to different parts of the earth for their work of torment, and none shall escape,

for no hiding place or concealment will be possible, because they are spiritual bodies, and like as the lightning penetrates through the thickest walls, so shall no bolts, or bars, or locks, or doors of any kind, exclude their unwelcome intrusion. Exposed at all hours by day and by night to such dreadful visitors, "they shall seek death, and they shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." Death in those days shall refuse to perform his office, he will suspend his functions at a time when he would be chosen rather than life. True, the time will be brief, it will only last for five months, but then such months where the hours appear as years! What confusion and disorder must prevail upon the earth; all business will be suspended, and all social intercourse broken up, "prayers then extorted shall be vain," for "God will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh." Men shall be constrained to admit that the hand of God is upon them, but this, instead of softening, will only harden their hearts against him who hath power over those plagues. After this judgment, a short breathing time will be given, but his long suffering with sinners being about to terminate for ever, it will not be prolonged. Continuing still alienated from God, and enemies in their minds by wicked works, the Lord God will proceed to do a work unexampled for severity in the history of the world. He will, by the agency of demons, destroy, within the period of thirteen months, one third of earth's inhabitants, as an awful example to the remaining two thirds, and should this fail in turning men from their rebellion, then will God give them all up to "strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they all may be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness;" and this lie will consist in the

rapid development of the man of sin, the personal Antichrist, whose coming shall be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.


“ One woe is past, and, behold, there come two more woes hereafter. And the ~~sixth~~ angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates ; and the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.”

No sooner has the sixth angel finished his terrible blast than he receives a command from the Most High to proceed to a certain locality : to the river Euphrates, and to loose or set at liberty four angels which are there bound ; bound with such chains as can bind spirits, “ fallen angels, reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, until the judgment of the great day.” Secret things belong to God, and it is not for man to speculate as to the reasons of four being together, lying bound in a river, but so it is, they are there, and can only emerge from thence at his will. The legion of devils, when commanded by our Lord to come out of a man, besought him that they might not be sent into the deep, but into the swine feeding on the mountain. And the spirit who took with him seven other spirits, to return to his former abode, had meanwhile been going through dry places, seeking

rest and finding none. When, therefore, they have any power of choice allowed, they walk through dry places, and the circumstance of these four being in the river would seem to have marked them out as rebels of a high order, and possibly of greater power than ordinary angels. They seem at once to understand the purpose of their freedom from imprisonment, possibly it may have been communicated to them now or ~~at~~ some former period, but in any case they are ready on the instant to comply with the divine command, when that command consists in bringing woe to the human race. Before the angels fell from their first estate, they delighted in that which is good, now their natures are changed, and they delight in that which is evil: the entire bent and current of their thoughts are evil, only evil, and that continually; full of hate to God, to each other, and especially to man, who is made in the image of God. They are ready to put forth the powers they possess to the extremest limit to which they are permitted to go; and on this awful occasion, those limits are not confined, as of old, to individuals here and there given over to demoniac possession, but extending to hundreds of millions of the human race. The probability is, that these four angels, thus loosed, are appointed as the leaders of the great army, who are to engage in this destructive campaign.

“And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand, and I heard the number of them.”

There is a definite number given, which John heard pronounced, viz., two hundred million. The four angels thus loosed, marshal, with all speed, the hosts to the battle; probably those employed in the pre-



ceding judgment, for they do not seem yet to have returned to the bottomless pit from which they issued forth. Their forms, as described under the first woe, were as horses prepared unto battle, and there are various other characteristics which point them out as in all probability the same ministers of vengeance, with increased powers granted them now, not only to torment, but also to destroy, headed as before by Apollyon the destroyer, and now also put into four great divisions, under the leadership of four Beelzebubs or princes of devils, each division consisting of fifty millions of fallen angels, one being despatched to the east, another to the west, another to the south, and another to the north. From the comparatively lengthened period of thirteen months being allowed for the work of destruction—it is gone about with awful deliberation, which must greatly add to the horrors of those days—it will be the slow but certain approach of an enemy from whom there is no possibility of escape, each of these divisions proceeding like a mighty phalanx from country to country, and deliberately destroying in their progress a third part of the inhabitants, and tormenting by their tails such as they do not consume by the breath of their mouths.

The time is not yet for the great tribulation, but it is at hand, for these two last woes will embrace it. The present accomplishes the destruction of the third part of men, and the next and last will (commencing with the vials of wrath) terminate in the total destruction of almost the whole existing generation, leaving the earth as destitute of inhabitants nearly as it was on that day when the ark rested upon the Mountains of Ararat; for God will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, and will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible, and he will make a man

more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations, for the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

“ And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. By these three were the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths.”

This fearful and tremendous judgment will be literally fulfilled and executed by evil angels, in visible forms, thus adding greatly to the terror of earth's guilty inhabitants. When God afflicted Egypt he also sent evil angels upon them, for in the 78th Psalm there is an enumeration given of the judgments, and the sending of evil angels is spoken of as the last and most terrible, with the exception of the final and crowning one, the destruction of all the first-born of Egypt at the midnight hour. God first turned their rivers into blood, and their floods that they could not drink; then he sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them, and frogs which destroyed them. He gave also their increase to the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts, and as if to express still more terribly his high displeasure against that people,

it is added, "he cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them." These are the judgments contained in the first and second woes; the first, in inflicting for a period of five months, torment so great as to render death preferable to life, and the second, during a period spread over of thirteen months, and by an army of two hundred millions of fallen or evil angels, he deprives of life a third part of mankind. These terrible scenes were all presented before the eye of the prophet, he speaks of them as a vision which he beheld, and particularly mentions that he heard the number of the army of the horsemen declared to be two hundred thousand thousand, and thus seeing, he wrote by command of Christ, "to show unto his servants things which were shortly to come to pass;" let his servants therefore so read them, not as containing dark and hidden meanings, but in their plain and simple sense, just as a child would understand, for that is most certainly the right and proper way to approach the contents of this book, and thus obtain the promised blessing—"blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the book of this prophecy, and keep (i.e., preserve in memory) those things which are written therein." It may be said that it is altogether at variance with common sense to suppose that fire, and smoke, and brimstone should issue from the mouths of horses, but it is not necessary to believe that these are horses of flesh and blood. When Elijah was taken up to heaven there appeared to the eyes of Elisha a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and in this chariot Elijah was carried up into heaven. Again, when the city where Elisha resided was surrounded by an army for the purpose of apprehending him, there appeared for his protection, covering the whole mountain on which the city stood,

chariots of fire and horses of fire ; and those now in question are spirits, ministers of Jehovah's vengeance —“ he maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire.” These ministers of his vengeance, although fallen, are still great in power and might, far excelling in strength the sons of men ; they go forth with resistless power, and show no mercy to young or old ; their eye shall not spare children. Before these terrible enemies all faces shall gather blackness, the nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters, and shall flee from place to place, vainly hoping to escape or conceal themselves from their implacable adversaries, who shall come with speed swiftly, none shall weary or stumble among them, none shall slumber nor sleep.

The good intended for men by this book has been lost by the mode of interpretation adopted by its expositors and explainers ; the judgments denounced exert no power nor influence, because supposed not to be literal but figurative. Like as the Jews of old received from the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel the tidings of woe, so do these words now lose all their force and power, and the word of God is made void by the explanations of men. Ezekiel said, “ah Lord God,” they say of me, “doth he not speak parables ;” so now of the book of Revelation is it said, “doth it not speak mysteries.” If any part of this book might seem to necessitate an interpretation other than literal, it would be the events recorded in this chapter, from the apparent improbability of such things really occurring upon the earth ; and the Spirit of God foreseeing this, has set his seal to its literal fulfilment, so far as regards this latter judgment, by the pen of the prophet Joel, by whom the same judgment is foretold. He calls it the day of the Lord, for the whole of these events, from the

opening of the first seal to the pouring out of the seventh vial, which ushers in his actual appearing, is termed the day of the Lord. "The day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall there be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth; the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run; like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble; as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained; all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men, they shall climb the wall like men of war, and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks; neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path, and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall; they shall climb up upon the houses, they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining, and the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great, for he is strong that executeth his word; for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?" If the prophet Joel had been appointed to give an exposition, and more

full delineation of the judgment contained in this Chapter, he could not have done so more plainly. The awful events which shall then be realized are set down with a vivid distinctness, which resemble a detailed account of past occurrences, rather than a prediction of the future. The day of the Lord will continue for ever, but its commencement, which is with judgment, is usually called by that name, and this period from first to last will not exceed the lifetime of a single generation, for "that generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled." "The day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord. The mighty man shall cry there bitterly; that day is a day of wrath, and of trouble and distress; a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord, and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung; neither their silver nor gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath, but the whole earth shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy." At this crisis, the full measure of divine vengeance has not come; but (according to the present census of the earth's population) four hundred millions of human beings shall be deprived of life by this last judgment, neither shall the two thirds who escape have passed through the fiery ordeal unharmed; for while the third part of men are killed by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, they also do hurt to the survivors with their tails, for their power is in their mouth, and in their tails, for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads, and with them they

do hurt. In these days there will be a total suspension of the usual festivities among men ; the voice of mirth and of gladness shall cease, and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride ; and terror and misery will be spread over all lands ; but this prolonged judgment will at last come to an end, and those fearful enemies will disappear. Their work for the time being accomplished they probably return to the abyss from whence they had emerged, headed by their angel Abaddon or Apollyon, the destroyer ; and men are once more left undisturbed to reflect upon the past, and be wise for the future, for the hour of mercy is not yet irrecoverably past to the survivors of the judgments. So long as it is a time accepted, God will hear ; so long as it is a day of salvation, God will save all who truly turn unto him. It is indeed the eleventh or last hour, but if the wicked will even now forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return unto the Lord, he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, and he will abundantly pardon ; for as I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live. While Jehovah sits between the cherubims upon the mercy seat, all men everywhere may repent, for he will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. The controversy of God with men is on account of their refusing to return. If they would humble themselves under the mighty hand of God ; if when he slew them they would seek him, and return and enquire early after God, and remember that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer, then would the Almighty be entreated of them ; he would relent in his purpose of vengeance, because he is a God who delighteth in mercy. The heavy and terrible rod, the

rod of iron with which the nations are about to be broken, would even now be withdrawn, for his bowels of mercy are not yet closed ; he still lingers over the children of men, not willing that they should perish, but that they should have everlasting life ; but in vain does he call, for they refuse ; in vain does he stretch forth his hand, for no man regardeth ; therefore will he also laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh ; when their fear cometh as desolation, and their destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when fear and anguish take hold upon them. The late dreadful judgments have only served to harden their hearts, and to steel their minds against him ; they have become callous, and their consciences are seared as with a hot iron : the earth is corrupt before him, the earth is filled with violence ; God looketh upon the earth, and behold, it is corrupt, for all flesh hath corrupted his way ; now therefore will God destroy and make an end of all nations.

“ The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk ; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

Once more “ God looks down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one ; their throat

is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips, their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known, there is no fear of God before their eyes."

The glorious gospel of the blessed God has been rejected. They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. The time is come for the last act in the great drama, an act which consists of several parts or scenes, the last and final being the passing away of the heavens with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein being burnt up.

THE SEVENTH ANGEL.

CHAPTER X.

1. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud ; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire :

2. And he had in his hand a little book open ; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.

3. And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth ; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write : and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven.

6. And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer :

7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

8. And the voice which I heard from heaven, spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and the earth.

9. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book, and he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly better, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was better:

11. And he said unto me, Thou must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Hitherto the narration of the events which are to be realized as preceding the personal appearing of the Son of God are strictly in the order in which they will receive their fulfilment, with the exception of the scene beheld by the prophet in the seventh chapter, from the 9th verse to the end, which in order of time will come in after the fourth verse of the twenty-first chapter. The events contained in this tenth chapter, from the first to the end of the seventh verse, have their proper place in the order of time at the nineteenth chapter, the 11th and following verses. They are therefore deferred, except to notice the announcement that the angel had in his hand a little book, open, which he has not when he actually appears coming down from heaven. The contents of this little book are only partially disclosed up to this crisis, but recommences the tale of woe with the eleventh chapter. It will be recollected that when the Lamb had taken the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne, it

was written within, and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals ; a long scroll written on both sides, rolled up, and sealed with seven seals. The seals have been opened, and the contents of one side of the parchment have been disclosed, and made known to many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings ; but there is the other side yet to be unfolded. The little book is now open, and in the same hand—the hands of him who opened the seals thereof—although now under another form, even that of a mighty angel, whose “face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light,” the halo of a rainbow surrounding his head, and his feet as pillars of fire. The whole book is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, and these things have been shown so far as the contents written within are concerned. Those on the back side now receive their development.

“ And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book, and he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up ; and it shall make thy belly better, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand, and ate it up ; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey ; and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings.”

The contents of this book are not sealed, neither are intended for any class exclusively, but for all classes, for "peoples, for nations, for tongues, and for kings," for as many as have ears to hear, and hearts to understand ; the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. The simple shall receive knowledge, the babes shall understand, while knowledge is hid from the wise and the prudent, to whom the plain rendering of the words appear foolishness ; but the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men ; for after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe, so it is also with the contents of this book. In laboured and prolonged efforts to find out deep and hidden meanings, the precious truths themselves, which lie on the surface, have been quite overlooked and discarded. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has pronounced this book to be unsealed, but the God of this world, who blinds the minds of men, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them, he hath sealed it, and so successfully, that it is uniformly avoided, as a book much beyond the reach of common intellects. "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, read this, I pray thee ; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed ; and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, read this I pray thee ; and he saith I am not learned." And thus this wonderful revelation, which was intended for the benefit of all in every age, has by this successful stratagem of the great enemy, been so neutralized, and perverted, and shrouded in dark and mysterious symbols, as to have been almost entirely a dead letter to all, the only

Parts which receive any attention being those contained within the first three chapters. In the Book of Ezekiel there is a similar form of injunction given to that prophet to eat the words which he was to declare. "I looked" [*said Ezekiel*] "and behold a hand was sent unto me, and lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without; and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Moreover he said unto me, Son of Man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll; and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me; Son of Man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them." To eat up the little book was a simple figure, requiring the prophet to understand and communicate its contents; if there did exist any doubts as to this, the quotation now given from Ezekiel fully shows it. To eat God's words is a common figure in Scripture, a figure which does not darken, but throws great light upon the meaning. "Thy words were found of me, and I did eat them, and they became the joy and the rejoicing of my heart;" again, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God; and Christ, who is the "word of God," has said, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. As healthful nourishment is to the body, so is Christ essential to the health and to the life of the soul: not his body (for the flesh profiteth nothing), "the words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life." John did as

commanded, he ate up the little book, and it was in his mouth sweet as honey, but when eaten it was bitter, being a revelation of judgments still greater and more awful than those which had preceded; "mourning, lamentation, and woe;" woes such as never had been, and never would again be, on the earth, for now the "transgressors are come to the full," the "harvest of the earth is ripe," and the Lord is about to pour out the vials of his wrath, in which are filled up the full measure of his judgments. This book, originally seen in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, was given to the Lamb, as being alone worthy to take and open the seals, and disclose the contents, which having done, he then gives the open book to his servant John, that the things on the back or outside might next be unfolded, and these begin with the 11th chapter, and onwards to the end; and are made known, not by oral description, but by signs, by visible images or representations of the things, for "he sent and signified them by his angel to his servant John." A series of events now occur, which, taking their rise from the day on which Antichrist's absolute supremacy is recognised, will last but for the brief period of three years and a half, yet into that short space will be crowded events of vast importance. Iniquity shall then reach its height, and shall lay aside all disguise. The wolves will cease to be covered with sheep's clothing, no longer seeking to conceal, but openly glorying in their shame. "For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord; to make empty the soul of the hungry, and to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail." It will be a time of open blasphemy, when men will dare the Almighty to his face, will curse God, and die, becoming more stubborn and rebellious

by chastisement. So it was with the Jews in Jeremiah's time, who, instead of being humbled under the mighty and afflicting hand of God, became open and desperate in their wickedness, and in answer to Jeremiah, who spoke unto them from the Lord, they thus replied, "as for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken to you, but we will certainly do whatsoever goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to her as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil." Thus the punishments of God have had only the effect of hardening men in crime, and of proclaiming it unashamed, but certain it is that continued wickedness on the part of men will draw down increased severity on the part of God, as the reply, through the prophet, to those sinners so bold in their crimes demonstrates. "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, we will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her; ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows. Therefore hear the word of the Lord all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying the Lord liveth. Behold, I will watch over them for evil and not for good; and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword, and by the famine, until there be an end of them." Thus shall

it be in these **last days** ; but by modes of punishment still more fearful than even the sword, or the famine, or the pestilence. As yet, however, and up to this point in the final crisis, repentance will not be too late, for thus it is written, "fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." By the restraining hand of God, the completed manifestation of the personal Antichrist, the man of sin, hath until now been retarded, as it is written, "and now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time, for the mystery of iniquity doth already work ; only he who now *letteth* will *let*, until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." They would not be drawn by the mercies of God, they would not be humbled under the mighty hand of God while testifying by his judgments to the evil of their ways. They would not hearken to his voice, they would none of him, so he gives them up to their own heart's lusts, to walk in their own counsels. Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, and shall now send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie ; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. When men become callous, having their consciences seared as with a hot iron, then do they become as brands fitted to destruction. When the

time has arrived that "transgressors are come to the full," then the closing scene is approaching; the days are numbered when the decree shall go forth that "time shall be no longer;" but first must Antichrist be introduced upon the stage, and then with his overthrow the end shall come. The writing on the back side of the scroll, now to be disclosed, chiefly refer to the events of the three years and a half which are to run from this time, and be succeeded by thirty days of fearful judgment, viz., the pouring out of five of the vials of wrath. After another interval of a month and a half, or forty-five days, which includes the sixth vial, then will the seventh angel sound his trumpet. "And in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." The proper place therefore for the introduction of this tenth chapter will be when that crisis is reached, but it necessarily comes in here to identify the Lamb, to whom the book was given, with the seventh angel, here described as "a mighty angel coming down from heaven," and also with the man clothed in linen (in Daniel), who lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that from the time the daily sacrifice should be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up; it should be for a time, times and a half, and when he (Antichrist) shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. Daniel writes, "I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the

voice of a multitude." "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." This period of time, times and a half, signifies three years and a half, a time being a scripture designation for a year; thus to Nebuchadnezzar the king, it was spoken that the duration of his punishment should be until seven times had passed over him, i. e., seven years. The time, times and a half, the forty and two months, and the twelve hundred and sixty days, all refer to one and the same period, and are certainly intended to be literally understood.

"And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth."

This action is to signify that the dominion of both is given to him, as it is written in the 89th Psalm, "I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers," and "his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth." The former part of this tenth chapter, having reference to the final scene, is reserved, and we now proceed to the events narrated in the eleventh chapter, which are contemporaneous with those recorded in the 12th and 13th chapters.

JERUSALEM TRODDEN UNDER FOOT.

CHAPTER XI

1. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod ; and the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not ; for it is given unto the Gentiles : and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

3. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth.

4. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth.

5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies ; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy ; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them who saw them.

12. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

“Rise and measure the temple of God.”

There is no other temple spoken of in this book but the temple of God, which is in heaven, and which

is one with the new Jerusalem which cometh down from God out of heaven. The tabernacle of God, which is to be with men. The measurement of this temple is given in the 21st chapter.

“But the court which is without the temple leave out.”

The court and the temple are at present far apart—this is spoken by anticipation—the time is at hand when the temple and the court will be conjoined, and continue in this relative position for ever; the court without is Palestine, the Lord’s land, and its central spot the holy city, which will be the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth.

“It is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city they shall tread under foot forty and two months.”

The court without, and its capital city, the Gentiles will possess, and hold in subjection during the last half of the last or seventieth week; at the termination of which “thy people shall be delivered.” It is of consequence to the proper understanding of this passage to remember that Palestine is at the time of these events restored to the Jewish nation; that the temple is erected, the city built, and the surrounding country laid out in sections, agreeably to directions given through the prophet Ezekiel in the 40th chapter and onwards. The children of Israel do not require a new revelation how to act on their return to their own land, all that is already given. These instructions as to the rebuilding of the temple, &c., had evident reference to their final return, when their Messiah should be in the midst of them. Thus it is written, “these are the ordinances of the altar *in the*

day when they shall make it, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, and to *sprinkle* blood thereon ;” the Jewish ritual will be restored in all its observances, and feasts, and statutes, and laws. Such is the fact, and it is not for us to contend against God, nor assume that we are wiser than he ; better to humble ourselves, as did the believing Jews, when they understood that the Gentiles were to be fellow heirs and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. It was repugnant to all their preconceived ideas of greatness as a nation, to learn that other nations and peoples were to share with them in the riches of the glory which God had promised to them ; but when assured by Peter that such was the case, and that God had visited the Gentiles to bless them, they bowed submissively to the divine arrangement, glorifying God and saying, “then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” So now it will be shown that the laws, the statutes, the ordinances, and sacred feasts, even the whole Mosaic ritual, was not intended to be temporary, but of permanent duration, for the observance of the whole house of Israel, and not for them only, but for all the nations of the earth, who shall come from all quarters, near and distant, to keep the holy feasts at their stated times, and to worship the Lord in his holy mountain at Jerusalem. Yes, they shall come to his holy mountain, and be made joyful in his house of prayer ; “their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon his altar, and his house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.” “And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me saith the Lord.” Apart from Christ, God has no pleasure in offerings, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin, but as commemorative of him they are pr

cious in his sight. When Noah "offered burnt-offerings on the altar, the Lord smelled a sweet savour," and said I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake. That sweet savour was "the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world," it was then prospective; but now those sacrifices will be alike precious in the retrospect. The commandments given to Moses respecting the tabernacle and its furniture, the clothing, and duties of the priesthood, the offerings to be presented, and the appointed times for observance, with all the other minute instructions which he received for the government and direction of the people, certainly convey the impression that stability was intended by the great Legislator; but all doubt on this point is dispelled by the positive testimony of Scripture. Thus, Aaron and his sons, when they came into the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they came near unto the altar to minister in the holy place, were enjoined to be arrayed in the holy vestments appointed, lest they should bear iniquity and die, and it is added, "it shall be a statute for ever unto him, and his seed after him." Again, with respect to the Sabbath, thus saith the Lord, "the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant; it is a sign between me and the children of Israel *for ever*." Again, "concerning the law of the meat-offering, the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord; before the altar; it shall be a statute for ever in your generations." Again, "in the seventh month, in the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and the priest shall make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord; it shall be a Sabbath of rest to you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever." "The priest shall make an atonement for

the holy sanctuary and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation, and this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year." The place where the sacrifices were to be offered was the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; "and the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat, for a sweet savour unto the Lord." "This shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy, for I am the Lord your God, and ye shall keep my statutes and do them." The feast of tabernacles in particular is referred to as one to which, in the coming glory of Messiah's reign, the nations of the earth would be required to come up and observe. Of this feast it is said, "ye shall take to you the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days, and ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year, it shall be a statute for ever in your generations; ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month." Concerning this feast thus writes the prophet Zechariah, "and it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague

wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." For worshipping of idols, and for neglect of the divine ordinances, the seed of Israel was scattered among the nations. "The land shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths while she lieth desolate without them, and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes, and yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God." They were dispersed among the nations because "they would not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that they might fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord their God." "But when thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I (Moses) command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. And thou shalt return, and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day." "I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you unto your own land, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them, and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet

for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them ; I will increase them with men like a flock, as the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men, and they shall know that I am the Lord. And David my servant shall be king over them ; and they all shall have one shepherd ; they shall also walk *in my judgments* and *observe my statutes* and do them." The law of Moses was thus never intended to be abrogated, but to continue in permanence throughout all ages, and accordingly we find it the concluding injunction of God, by the last of the Old Testament Prophets, viz., Malachi. "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments," and along with this injunction, an intimation that Elijah the prophet would be sent to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, for the restoration of peace, based on truth. Our Lord testified as to the personal return of Elijah, and added, "he truly shall first come and restore all things." The "all things to be restored," most certainly refer to the resumption of the "law of Moses his servant, which he commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel," which came into desuetude soon after their entrance into Canaan, and although partially revived at different stages of their history, yet remain to be fulfilled in all the order and exactitude of the divine appointment.

Having made this necessary digression, we now return to those perilous and eventful times, as recorded in the eleventh chapter, when the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt, having her temple restored, and her ancient people again in occupancy of their territory, not however, as yet, a holy nation, but very

much the opposite ; a corrupt and degenerate people, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, who have forsaken the Lord, and are gone away backward. "Therefore will the Lord enter into judgment with the ancients of his people and the princes thereof, because they have eaten up the vineyard, and the spoil of the poor is in their houses." They are at this time a restored, but not a regenerated nation, and have yet to be sifted as through a sieve, by him whose fan is in his hand, and who will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Meantime the personal Antichrist has all but attained to absolute supremacy over the world, and has his eye set upon the subjugation of the Jewish nation, and "his heart is against the holy covenant." Their rulers seek to avert the ruin of their kingdom by entering into treaties of agreement with him (no doubt by transferring to him a portion of that immense wealth which they had acquired among the nations), and thus "they make a covenant with death, and with hell are they at agreement." Rejoicing in the supposed success of their policy, they expect to escape the calamities of other countries, and the miseries to which they are subjected under this fierce king and cruel Lord, but "cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm," for thus saith the Lord, "because ye have said we have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves, therefore, I will lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place, and your covenant with death shall be disan-

nulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." Conformably with this prediction, the nation will be trodden down by Antichrist, who will disregard all his stipulated agreements. They shall send ambassadors of peace to remind him of his solemn engagements, but they shall "weep bitterly" from the fruitlessness of their efforts to avert the ruin of their country; "the highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth, he (Antichrist) hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man;" "the earth mourneth and languisheth; Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down; Sharon is like a wilderness, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits." "The country is desolate, the cities are burned with fire, your land strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers; and the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." This very small remnant is the hundred and forty and four thousand who were sealed, that they should be exempted from all the judgments under the trumpets and under the vials, as it is written, "hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." To them, the locusts who came forth from the bottomless pit were commanded to do no hurt. They were not to hurt those men which have the seal of God in their foreheads. This is the remnant who flee into the wilderness, to the place prepared of God for a time, times and a half, to escape the persecution of Antichrist. To them these words are spoken, "come, my people, enter thou

into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee ; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity ; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." When the events recorded in this chapter are fulfilled, the Jewish nation, as has been already shown, is in Palestine, and have gone there probably with the consent of the great powers who govern the European states. This people, so long scattered among the nations, will gradually return from their dispersion, and the worship of God, according to their ancient ritual, will be set up ; yet, as a nation the veil shall still be upon their hearts ; but among them shall be a poor and afflicted people, despised of their countrymen, but honoured of God, whose eyes have been opened to see that he is very Christ whom their fathers crucified and slew, and for whose coming in glory and majesty they patiently wait. These are they who tremble at Jehovah's word, and to them it is spoken, " your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified ; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." This is the remnant of Jacob who are being prepared to meet and welcome the Lamb on the Mount Zion ; and a mighty agency will God employ for this purpose, even these his two prophets, mentioned, as prophesying in sackcloth during the time that Antichrist reigns, but who long previous will have had this remnant under their special tuition, that they may present them as a chaste virgin unto Christ, when he comes. With regard to the time at which Palestine shall be re-occupied by her own children, it is not for us to say, for the times and seasons are in his hand ; but there is a set time to

favour Zion, and when that time has arrived, it will be done with all the exactitude as when they departed out of Egypt. Referring to their deliverance from Egypt, God gave Abraham to understand the year on which his seed should be delivered from the nation to whom they should be in bondage. "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years, and it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." So in like manner, there is a time, a set time, to favour Zion, and to rebuild Jerusalem. In the first, or Babylonish captivity, the land was to enjoy her Sabbaths for seventy years. "In the first year of Darius' reign, I, Daniel, understood by books, the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." Daniel therefore set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, the restoration of his nation. "O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain," "and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's sake, O Lord, hear ; O Lord, forgive ; O Lord, hearken and do ; defer not for thine own sake, O my God : for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." In answer to this prayer of the prophet the angel Gabriel was sent to announce to him, not the immediate deliverance, which was a very small matter, but the eventual, the final, and everlasting deliverance of Israel from all enemies." "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment


came forth, and I am come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved; therefore, understand the matter, and consider the vision." (May God give us grace likewise to consider this vision, that we too may understand the matter and the time appointed.)

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision, and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator."



These four verses contain the answer of God to the prayer of Daniel for the restoration of his people; and is twofold, and refers to two periods, viz., the first and second coming of Messiah. The threescore and two weeks to his first, and the seven weeks to his second coming, hence the separation of these two dates. From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, when he shall be cut off, will be sixty and two weeks, and again, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, at his second appearing, shall be seven weeks. It will be sometime during the currency of these seven weeks of years that the great event, as unfolded in the opening of the first seal, will take place; very probably at their commencement. These will indeed be troublous times, and in them will be fulfilled the judgments recorded in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th seals. The final or seventieth week commences with the opening of the seventh seal, and closes with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the Lord himself will appear in person, and time shall be no longer. Thus we have the time given which intervened from the edict of Cyrus until the date of our Lord's crucifixion, and which was exactly sixty and two weeks of years; and now we look for another edict or general accord among the governments, no doubt for political ends, whereby every possible facility will be given to the Jews to return to their own land. And from the date of this unanimous concurrence by Britain, by France, and particularly by Russia, and Austria, and Prussia, will commence the time of the end. Seven weeks of years will Israel exist as a restored but still unbelieving people, and at the beginning of the remaining week, the personal Antichrist, the man of sin, then a rising power, will enter into an alliance with them. They

form a compact with him, but when the half of the week has elapsed, and when it suits his purpose to break his covenant engagements—having by that time attained supremacy over the nations—he will inundate the country with his troops, and “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles forty and two months, being the remaining half of the last of the seventy weeks,” which period of iron rule over the whole earth being completed, “that that is determined shall be poured upon the desolator, viz., the vials of the wrath of God, in which will be filled up the full measure of his judgments; and immediately after the tribulation of those days shall be seen the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Thus the seventy weeks shall be accomplished, which “are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, &c.,” for then shall Jerusalem be holy. He who is the salvation of Israel shall appear in Zion, the place which he has chosen for his rest for ever; then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. This, then, is the answer to Daniel’s prayer—God makes known to him the time of Israel’s final deliverance from all enemies, when the holy one of Israel himself will be in the midst of them for evermore. The events of the last week show that the time extends on to the consummation of all things, and consequently must date backward from that consummation, and the date to which we have to go back, as instructed by the angel, is the going forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, and this circumstance demonstrates that there are two periods, distinct from each other, the one pointing to the first, and the other to the second coming. In the middle of the final week, the week of judgment, a circumstance takes place which clearly stamps it as the last, for then “the sacrifice and

oblation shall cease." Jerusalem comes under the power of the great Dictator, and he himself, "the abomination of desolation, stands in the holy place," and consequently the worship of God in his temple is suddenly brought to a close. This event is often, in various Scriptures, referred to as a distinctive sign of the approaching end ; when this impersonation of evil, this son of perdition, will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, and assume to himself divine honours, showing himself in God's temple, which he thus desecrates, as God, for which reason he is called the abomination of desolation—the term abomination being throughout the Scriptures applied to idols. As a further proof that the last verse refers to the time of the end, the concluding words of the Angel to Daniel show—many (he says) shall be purified, and made white, and tried ; but the wicked shall do wickedly ; and none of the wicked shall understand ; but the wise shall understand. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." This cannot mean years, for how could one wait and come to a thousand and three hundred and five and thirty years ; but the certainty of their being days and not years is still more apparent, inasmuch as the king spoken of in the eleventh chapter, from the 21st verse, and onward to the end of the chapter, is the same, under whose direction and command "they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the *daily sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." It is

“he who shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain (Jerusalem), yet shall he come to his end, and none shall help him” And *at that time* shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time ; and *at that time* thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end : many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Thus the daily sacrifice is taken away by a king who does according to his will, exalting himself and magnifying himself above every god, speaking marvellous things against the God of gods, who prospers till the indignation be accomplished, and that that is determined *done* ; and with the destruction of this king comes the closing scene, when Michael shall stand up, thus showing that days literally must be understood, and not years ; and also showing that the seventy weeks of Daniel have reference both to the first and second coming of Messiah, and particularly to his second coming, as being the time of Israel’s deliverance, concerning which the angel had been sent to instruct Daniel. It is important to notice that it is the last or seventieth week, in the middle of which the sacrifice and oblation are made to cease, leaving a half week, viz., three years and a half, or 1260 days, to complete the seventy weeks, and thirty days added for the time of trouble or great tribulation, makes up the 1290 days. The remaining forty-five days being allowed for the mustering of the hosts of nations to the Battle of Armageddon, makes the completed number 1335 days. “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to

the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." He that waiteth and cometh to that day shall receive a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give unto him, and unto all who have waited for his appearing. In the eighth chapter of Daniel, in the vision which he saw by the river Ulai, Antichrist is spoken of as a little horn which came forth out of one of four horns in the he-goat. It waxed great, even to the host of heaven, and it cast down some of the host, and of the stars, to the ground, and stamped upon them; "yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the *daily sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his (Jehovah's) sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression (i. e., the transgression of Israel), and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised and prospered. Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? i. e., how long time shall intervene from the defilement until the restoration of the sanctuary, and of the daily sacrifice, and the sanctuary again be made holy." The reply is, "until two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." The days commence from the date of defilement of the sanctuary, so that here is a period added to the thirteen hundred and thirty five days, of other nine hundred and sixty five days, during which the appointed sacrifices for the cleansing of the sanctuary are being offered, at the end of which the holy place is worthy to receive him whose name is holy, when "he will dwell among the children of Israel for ever." This little horn is explained by the angel

to be a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, whose reign is at that time when "transgressors are come to the full;" and the fact that his reign is at such a time, is itself a proof of the approaching end, for it is when the iniquities of nations reach their climax that the arm of the Almighty is stretched out to destroy. This king of fierce countenance shall stand up against the prince of princes (which is Christ the Lord), but he shall be broken without hand, for the Lord will consume him with the sword of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming. This is the beast of the nineteenth of Revelations, who, with the kings of the earth, and their armies, are gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him. These both are cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone." Thus, again, is the taking away of the daily sacrifice declared to be the work of the personal Antichrist, whose appearance is the prelude to the appearance of the Lord, and thus are the days shown to be days, and not years; and the last of Daniel's weeks to apply to the time when his people shall be delivered, even when Michael, the prince of Israel, shall stand up: which was the important matter that Daniel desired to know, and for which he had so long and so earnestly supplicated the God of his fathers, viz., "that his anger and his fury might be turned away from his city Jerusalem, his holy mountain." We conclude, then, "that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem the second time, unto Messiah the prince, shall be seven weeks of years;" "the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times"—a prediction which can have reference only to the

second coming, as the times were not such as could be called troublous when Jerusalem was rebuilt after the Babylonish captivity. Therefore when the commandment shall go forth (by such power or powers as may have the right to issue such a commandment) to rebuild Jerusalem by her own people, then the time can be with certainty fixed as to the approaching advent; and to "the wise who shall understand," the great problem will be solved, and they shall lift up their heads and rejoice that their redemption draweth nigh, but, until that event, there is no Scripture data to warrant the fixing of dates as to the time of the Lord's coming; still we are not left in entire uncertainty regarding it, for many circumstances serve to indicate its approximate nearness. It was a common belief among the early fathers that the six thousand years would terminate the mystery of the fall, and that the "rest" which remains for the people of God, would commence on the seventh day, i. e., with the seventh millenary; and much that is written in the Scriptures tend to strengthen the impression—first, the six days in which God made the heavens and the earth, and his resting on the seventh day are types of it. Again, mention is made, in different parts, of one day being with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, and connecting this with the millenary period—being expressly said to be "a thousand years"—shows the previous six to have been allotted to the work of redemption, as the six days were to the work of creation. Again, the great image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream points to a like result. The whole image is gone, the feet alone remaining; the ten toes only not as yet fully developed. Unless, therefore, the feet and toes should continue for a period much out of proportion with the rest of the image—the

time for the kingdom of God must indeed be near—for in the days of these kings (the ten kings represented by the ten toes) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed ; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. The stone cut out without hands shall smite the image upon his feet, that are of iron and clay, and break them to pieces. Again, the length of time to which “the times of the Gentiles” have now extended, indicate the near approach of that day. When God was about to cast off Israel to a lengthened captivity and dispersion, “he visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.” This visitation has extended to nearly two thousand years, and the result has been the same as with his ancient people, comparatively few have embraced the gospel, and so become reconciled to God. And as Israel knew not the time of his visitation, it ended after a period of less than two thousand years from their entrance as a nation into Canaan. Israel was broken off, and the Gentiles were grafted in. The Gentiles cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, were grafted contrary to nature, into a good olive tree, and thus were made partakers of the divine goodness ; but they have not continued in his goodness, and in their turn shall be cut off also, for the ways of God are equal, and are in conformity with his divine procedure in the past. To the Gentiles also, judgment shall be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the Lord God will make a full end of all the nations among whom Israel has been dispersed, and to whom the word of salvation has been sent and rejected. Thus the time is nearly up for the probation of the Gentiles. It is not now a question of thousands of years, or scarcely even of hundreds,

the night is indeed far spent, and the day is at hand. To the question, Watchman what of the night? the answer is, "the morning cometh, and so doth the night." At present all is uncertainty as to the actual date of the Lord's coming, and all fixing of dates is erroneous; but this uncertainty will cease within at least a half century prior to his advent, for then the seven of Daniel's weeks, as applicable to the time of the end, will be running their course. "The wise shall understand," "and they that understand shall instruct many." These will be the troublous times and the beginnings of sorrows; iniquity shall greatly abound, and the love of many shall wax cold, but they who endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. Such as know and rejoice in the approaching consummation will be thereby strengthened to sustain the fiery trial, for there will be a time of great persecution, "and they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, and by captivity." The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits, but some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed. Thus then, as has been shown, the first certain indication of the coming day will be the return of a portion of the Jewish nation, with consent of the existing powers, to Palestine, and their establishment there as a recognized nation; then will the waste cities begin to be rebuilt, and the desolations of many generations begin to be restored, and in particular the temple shall be erected on her former site, all in conformity with the specifications given to Ezekiel the prophet; yet once more to be desecrated by him who is called the abomination of desolation, which event will take place in the latter half of the last of the seventy weeks. The closing and most eventful

period commences with the concluding half of the week, first, in the ejection or casting down of Satan and his angels from heaven, and their constrained abode within the limits of our atmosphere; next, in the assumption of universal empire by Antichrist; next in the overthrow and dispersion again of God's covenant and chosen people by Antichrist, who profanes the temple, makes the oblation to cease, and blasphemously arrogates to himself the honour due alone to God. Contemporaneous with the reign of Antichrist will be the prophecy of the two great prophets, the two anointed ones, who stand by the Lord of the whole earth. Up to the end of the ninth chapter of Revelation, the order of events have, with one exception, followed in succession, but the tenth chapter introduces the seventh angel before his time, because it was indispensably necessary that he should be identified as the same who had received the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne, now, not a sealed, but an open scroll, written within and on the backside; the events described within being fulfilled, it is handed to John, who must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings, and thereby bringing out the contents of the other side of the scroll, which is given from the eleventh chapter to the end of the book; but not as before, in successive order, because the events are partly synchronous, they take place, and are being accomplished about one and the same time, of which here is an enumeration—first, the casting down of Satan and his angels from heaven, followed by the absolute supremacy of Antichrist; his impious assumption of divinity, his persecution, first of the sealed number, the seed of the woman, (clothed with the sun) and then of the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus

Christ. At the sametime, and during Antichrist's short reign, the prophecy in sackcloth of the two witnesses ; the total and instantaneous overthrow of the Church of Rome, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. All these events are fulfilled within the brief period so often referred to : except the first, which immediately precedes, viz., the casting down of Satan and his angels from heaven."

" And there was war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world ; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ : for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

Up until this period the final expulsion from heaven of Satan and his angels has not taken place ; until this period the accuser of the brethren has had access to the throne, and has employed his privilege in perpetual accusations against the children of God, triumphing over their falls, and distorting all their good deeds. There is a striking illustration of this in Job—"there was a day when the sons of God

came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil. Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side; thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." Thus was Satan permitted to appear among the angels, the Sons of God, and prefer his accusations against the people of the Lord, and although he fails in making good his assertions, he is not at all ashamed, but still perseveres in his accusations against them. "Again there was a day when the Sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord." Unashamed at having falsely accused Job, who had held fast his integrity and his confidence in God, amid the destruction of all his earthly property, and the sudden death of his children; he returns to the charge, reiterates his accusation, and maintains that if God would suffer him to proceed a little farther, and touch his person, that then he would curse his God. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life, but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone, and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." The result showed that he was a false accuser, for Job meekly endured his suffering, saying, "What!"

shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. This is a sufficient illustration as to the position of our great adversary, and his access into heaven, up until his ejection therefrom, at the period we have now reached. This has for all wise purposes been permitted of God, *but* it is consolatory to reflect that if we have an adversary in heaven to hold up before God all the worst traits of our character, we have at the same time an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; but for this, the accusations of the enemy must prevail in calling down judgments; for where shall another Job be found, to come unscathed through the fiery ordeal which he underwent; but he whom we serve and love, is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Not only has Satan access to heaven, but there are occasions of dispute, and even conflict, with the angels unfallen, and also with him who is Lord of Angels as of men; thus, "Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil (he disputed about the body of Moses), would not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee; *again*, a mysterious conflict appears to have taken place when the angel sent by God to reveal things of future import to Daniel, was, if not prevented, hindered and deterred for three weeks in carrying out the divine command, by one of the powers of darkness. "I am come," said the angel to Daniel, "for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, the chief prince, came to help me." Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall

thy people in the latter days, for yet the vision is for many days ; and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia, and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. We do not know which of the powers of darkness this may refer to, but we know that Satan is himself designated the prince of the power of the air, the prince of this world, and the God of this world? There is much in regard to spiritual beings that must necessarily be at present mysterious to us, but one thing is apparent, that, as yet, the separation between the fallen and the unfallen angels has not become final, and until this takes place, even the happiness of heaven itself is incomplete ; but the great conflict yet to take place in heaven between Michael and his angels on the one side, and the Devil and his angels on the other, will issue in a final and eternal separation between the angels who departed not from their allegiance, but kept their first estate ; from those who did not do so, but left their own habitation, and rebelled against God. This important event also will for ever deprive the arch-enemy of mankind from lodging evil accusations against the children of God, for the accuser of the brethren shall be cast down, who accused them before our God night and day, i. e., without intermission. Whenever the Sons of God come together, he comes amongst them for the express purpose of lodging heavy complaints against them who are called to be heirs of salvation, “but they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony,” “and they loved not their lives unto the death.” It were useless to speculate as to the nature of this great conflict between hosts of spiritual beings set in battle array against each other ; certain it is that forces and power of inconceivably greater magnitude than any which men can bring

to bear against each other, will then be called into requisition. On the side of the enemy will be principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and such an array of strength will be displayed, and such a combined resistance made, as far to surpass our comprehension, and compared with which, all human power is feebleness itself. But who can resist the Almighty arm? or combat successfully against him? "The dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." When the Devil was thus thrust down to the earth, his angels were thrust down with him; a terrible army of fallen beings, not fewer than a third part of the celestial creation, "for his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth. And now, woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." This final period, begins, then, with the ejection and overthrow of Satan and his angels, after a fierce conflict; such a conflict as can be waged by spirits great in power and in might; principalities and powers in heavenly places, conflicting with principalities and powers, still great, though fallen, being the rulers of the darkness of this world; but God, in whose hands are the issues of all conflicts, gives the victory to his own "elect" angels, and the overthrow is complete. The great dragon, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning, he and all his followers (drawn into their rebellion probably by him) are precipitated to the earth, and

confined within the limits of our atmosphere, so that all beyond is impenetrable, being finally shut out from heaven. It is but the first step in their terrible descent. In a very brief period there will be another descent, when the bottomless pit will open her mouth wide to receive their whole host, and in this horrible prison shall they be shut up many days. The hatred of Satan and his angels to men, will, by their precipitation to our earth, be greatly intensified, "for the devil is come down unto you, having in great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time," therefore, woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea. Every possible effort will now be made, to involve, without exception, the whole existing generation in their own irretrievable ruin. "And the dragon shall be wroth with the woman, and shall go to make war with the remnant of her seed who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Every man, therefore, who in those days will hold fast his integrity will have to pass through a fiery ordeal, for whosoever will not worship the golden image which Antichrist sets up shall be slain. Up until this period the flood-gates of wickedness have been restrained; God having mercifully kept back the tide of evil from overrunning the whole earth, but now this restraining power shall be withdrawn, and transgressors shall come to the full, and consequently the time for judgment be ripe. Crime will no longer cover itself with a veil to hide its deformity, but men shall glory in their shame, and boast themselves in their wickedness. And therefore it is written, "were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore shall they fall among them that fall. At the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord." Thus, the prelude to the inaugura-

tion of Antichrist as universal monarch, is the casting down to the earth of the devil and his angels, an event which will occasion great joy in heaven. "Rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them." Heaven will now be heaven in its completeness, and the joy of its inhabitants will be exceeding great, both because the enemies of God have no more place there, and because their expulsion is the harbinger of the kingdom of God.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come (or is about to come) salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night."

Satan, the great arch-enemy of God and man, knowing that he hath but a short time after his ejection to the earth, will seek to make the most of that short time, by accomplishing the greatest possible amount of evil within these short limits. It is against the Most High that all his shafts are directed. Against himself personally he has no power, but if he can indirectly wound him, by turning the earth into a pandemonium, that will be some gratification to his malignant mind, and with this view he arranges and matures a great plan of getting up an *opposition God*, one who should acknowledge his power to proceed from the dragon ; thereby recognizing him as his superior. This Antigod or Antichrist, this great impersonation of evil, is spoken of by various names in Scripture ; he is called by Isaiah, the "Assyrian," "the fierce king," and "cruel Lord." In the 14th chapter of Isaiah he is particularly

described as the "oppressor," "the king of Babylon," by which name he is also designated in the prophet Jeremiah, and in others of the prophets ; and in Revelations, 17th chapter, as "*the scarlet coloured beast full of names of blasphemy*," upon whose shoulders the great whore of Babylon sits. As "*the beast that ascendeth up out of the bottomless pit*," and "riseth up out of the sea," he is styled the "wicked one," and by St. Paul, the "man of sin ;" and is alluded to by nearly all the prophets in connection with, and as preliminary, to the commencement of the eternal reign of Messiah. When the ten toes of the great image are clearly developed, which are the ten distinct kingdoms into which the Roman Monarchy has yet to be divided, then after them is another king to arise, and this is Antichrist. "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the Saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of a time" (or the forty and two months of Revelation). He is the little horn mentioned in the 8th chapter of Daniel, which waxeth exceeding great toward the south and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land, and is interpreted by the angel to be a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, who is to stand up in *the latter time of the kingdom, when transgressors are come to the full* ; his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power, and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. "And through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many ; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes, but he shall be broken without hand ;" he is the "desolator"

mentioned in the end of the ninth chapter of Daniel, and also the "vile person," described at great length in the eleventh chapter, commencing at ~~the~~ 21st verse, onward to the end of the chapter. He is there shown as exalting himself above all that is called God, yet does honour to the God of forces—by which name he recognises the dragon—to whom he is indebted for his power, and his seat, and great authority. To this God of forces he dedicates a golden image, of which the image that Nebuchadnezzar set up was the type. Within this god the dragon resides, speaking through the mouth of the image, as of old through the oracle, and requiring of all nations, and peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, universal homage. This great development and manifestation of the man of sin is the immediate result consequent upon the overthrow of the Devil and his angels, and is in accordance with his scheming device, that he might thereby claim a victory over the Most High on earth, if he could not claim one in heaven; but the result will show that in this also he is baffled, by a wisdom and power infinitely superior to his own, and who at the same time subserves his own all-wise purposes, and makes the wrath of men and devils to contribute to his praise.

It was thus necessary to advert to the commencement of the eleventh chapter by showing the causes that led to the events therein recorded. The holy land, again inhabited by the Jewish nation, "a nation terrible" from their beginning hitherto, a nation scattered and peeled, and now to be again laid desolate by the strong arm of Antichrist with his legions; a nation "meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled," with its

capital, Jerusalem, in the hands of the Gentiles. "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt; add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices, yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow; and it shall be unto me as Ariel. And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. Moreover, the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust." Jerusalem shall be occupied by strangers, and that in such numbers as to be like small dust, and it shall be trodden under foot during the period of Antichrist's supremacy, viz., for forty and two months, and then the arm of the Lord will be lifted up against him as it was against Egypt of old, for the oppression of Israel his chosen. The Apostle John writes that there are many Antichrist's, and therefore it has been inferred that Antichrist is not an individual, but consisting of many persons; but the very minute account which is given in many parts of Scripture of individual acts done by him, clearly show, that while there may be a host of abettors, there is most certainly reference made to a single man, who shall in himself be the embodiment and impersonation of all evil; the man of sin, who shall exalt himself above all that is called God, so that he, arrogating to himself the name and authority of God, shall sit in the temple of God, showing himself to be God, claiming for himself the worship due to God, by whom the sacrifice and oblation offered to God is made to cease. Thus, the Antichrist of the last age is indeed a single individual, as truly as was Nebuchadnezzar, or Alexander, or Cæsar. Nebuchadnezzar was a type of Antichrist, in the universality of his empire, in the arbitrariness and tyranny of his rule, but especially in his setting up a golden image,

and commanding all nations, on pain of death, to bow down before it and worship. The whole of the 13th chapter being devoted to a description of Antichrist and the part he takes in the concluding drama, it will be necessary in the meantime to pass over the 11th and 12th chapters, and proceed to an elucidation of the 30th.

THE MAN OF SIN.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4. And they worshipped the dragon who gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9. If any man have an ear to hear, let him hear.

10. He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them who dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15. And he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their hand, or in their foreheads.

17. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the


number of a man ; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.

“ And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.”

The prophet was first caught up into heaven, and in vision saw the glory of Jehovah's temple, and the preparatory measures which were then being taken for the inauguration of Messiah's eternal kingdom ; but from the commencement of the 10th chapter his position is changed, for he then beholds coming down from heaven a mighty angel ; so that he himself is now standing on the earth ; and here we find him declaring that in beholding the vision which he is now to relate, he himself stood upon the sand of the sea, being the best place for beholding any remarkable object, which, arising out of the sea, should attract his attention, and while thus engaged, he saw a beast rise up out of the sea. That this object which he beheld, was a man, is shown from the concluding verses, where his number is declared to be the number of a man, and besides, the works ascribed to him are applicable only to human intelligence. The beasts described by Daniel, were men—thus in the 7th of Daniel, in the 3rd verse, it is said, “ and four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another,” and the explanation is given in the 11th verse, “ these great beasts which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth.” This beast beheld by John, is a man, a man elevated to the dignity of a throne, even a throne of many kingdoms ; his rising out of the sea denotes his having sprung

from the people. The woman who is afterwards seen upon his shoulders is represented as sitting upon many waters, and these waters are declared to be peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. "Woe to the multitude of many people that make a noise like the noise of the seas, and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters." The sound of a multitude of voices is compared to the roaring of the sea, thus, "let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (the latter half of the verse being the explanation of the former). Antichrist rises up from the mass of waters (the peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues), not a descendant of kings, but the chosen of the people, and not legitimately chosen, but stealthily, and by intrigue, rises up step by step, until he reaches the summit of power. "A vile person to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom; but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries." A sovereign, at first of very limited extent, his kingdom a small one, a little horn which rises up after the ten horns, and before whom three of the first are plucked up by the roots, not subjugated and tributary, but plucked up by the roots, incorporated and annexed to his own previous limited territory, which thus becomes a kingdom of large extent, and gives him a position, not only of equality, but even of priority among the seven remaining kingdoms. He is thus gradually progressing in his upward course to the supremacy or headship over all nations; he becomes strong with a small people, waxing exceeding great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. The cravings of ambition increase in the proportion in which they are gratified; he adds kingdom to kingdom; "as with the arms of a flood

they are overflown before him and are broken." He, the idol of his armies, scatters among them the prey, and spoil, and riches, and they are invincible, with him for their leader. Progressing in his conquests with rapid strides, he aims at universal sovereignty, and although meeting with great resistance, he soon overcomes every obstacle, and becomes the acknowledged head and ruler of the whole earth. "The ten horns are ten kings" (increased again from seven to ten), these agree and gave their kingdoms to him, and he reigns without a rival. The dark traits of his character become more fully developed as he approaches the goal of his ambition, and it is when he stands upon the pinnacle of human greatness that he becomes revealed as the man of sin ; he becomes the unveiled impersonation of all evil, the most daring and fearless blasphemer that ever trod the earth. It is when he has attained to the position of universal monarchy that he comes forth into manifestation as the veritable Antichrist, foretold by the prophets, and described with such minuteness in the chapter now under consideration. He is beheld rising up out of the sea—the man of the people—distinguishing himself by his rapid conquests, until he obtains a crown, then a triple crown, and like a mighty flood overpowering and overwhelming all resistance and opposition, he stands upon the summit. The seven heads have a double signification, first they represent seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and on which he shall sit, with the woman upheld by him, and this assuredly is the city Rome, which is built on seven hills ; the ancient capital of emperors who governed the whole earth, and for many centuries the mistress of nations under the papal hierarchy. Here shall be the seat of the beast, the capital of the whole earth, where, during his short reign, his will shall be law



to every kingdom and people. There is at the same-time another signification for the seven heads. The head is the seat of intelligence, and the number seven, signifying completeness, must be intended to denote the extraordinary intelligence and consummate ability of this man; and so he is represented by Daniel as understanding dark sentences, and through his policy, causing craft to prosper in his hand; as possessed of amazing quickness and activity, with indomitable perseverance. But what confirms the supposition that the seven heads signify the one head that guides and directs all, is, that one of these heads was as it were wounded to death, and this one head is declared in the 12th verse to be the beast himself, who had in one of his engagements been mortally wounded, but contrary to universal expectation, and to the surprise and astonishment of all around, his deadly wound is healed suddenly—miraculously healed—so as to produce universal wonder, and so prepare the way for that worship which was so soon to be demanded, on pain of death, for disobedience. The ten horns express the extent of his power which reaches over all, and the ten crowns upon the horns denote that his power was exercised by those ten kings, who, while holding the dignity of kings, were the ministers of his pleasure, and through whom he governed the whole earth.

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.”

In him is concentrated all the stealthy craft and cruelty of the leopard, all the ferocity of the bear, and

his great swelling words of vanity, and proud defiance alike of God and man, is fitly described by his mouth being as the mouth of a lion ; but with all his greatness he is but the creature, the instrument of another. It is the dragon, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, to whom he is indebted for his power, and seat, and great authority. This great enemy of the human race has in all ages exercised a much greater influence in the affairs of men than he has received credit for, and there was some degree of truth in his own declaration, when inviting the Son of God to bow down and worship him, he said, after showing him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, "all these things, and all this power will I give thee, for they are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it ; if thou, therefore, will fall down and worship me, all shall be thine." Satan is the ruler of the darkness of this world, and (although constantly under the restraining hand of God) he exercises great power and authority on the earth, not for its benefit, but for its hurt ; it is he who sets men and nations against each other to war and to fight ; it is he who incites to crime of all sorts ; to murder and to suicide, in which last his agency is often apparent ; it is he who is the procuring cause of nearly all the evils which afflict mankind. It is said of Christ that "he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ;" thus we find that the supreme position of universal monarch to which Anti-christ attained, is ascribed to the potency of the dragon, who gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death ; and his deadly wound was healed ; and all the world wondered after the beast."

Antichrist, in one of his battles, had a personal encounter with the enemy—it was a sword combat—and he had received a deadly thrust, and was mortally wounded, yet, suddenly and miraculously his wound is healed, and the fame thereof is spread abroad; he is from henceforth presumed to be more than mortal, and “all the world wonder after the beast.”

“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him.”

They, that is all the world, worshipped the dragon, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, whose ambition it is to receive divine honour, who even sought it from the Son of God himself, but he rebuked him for his wickedness, saying, “get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Not so, think the deceived and degraded multitudes, for they worship the dragon as the source of power, and therefore ascribe to him a dignity even greater than to Antichrist, whom also they worship as God. The devil leads them captive by his will, and at his pleasure. To his agency they ascribe the marvellous power, and success of the beast, and they worship the beast as his visible representative. He is their God made manifest, with whom they challenge comparison with all and every other power, saying, “who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?”

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”

Daniel says of him that he had “a mouth speaking great things”—the identical words used here—“he shall speak great words against the Most High;” “he shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods;” he shall utter fearlessly the most daring blasphemies against the supreme governor of the universe, and shall be permitted to do so without restraint for a period of forty-two months.

“And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.”

Pharaoh was the type of Antichrist, and he blasphemed God when he said to Moses, who is the Lord, that I should obey him? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” Nebuchadnezzar was also the type of Antichrist, when he said in blasphemous arrogance, “and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” These were types of this man of sin, this impersonation of all wickedness; this man according to the devil’s own heart, in whom he beholds his own image expressly portrayed; a man who shall not regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any God, for he shall magnify himself above all; he shall not confine his blasphemy to God, but to everything sacred, to his tabernacle, and to them that dwell in heaven. Jehovah’s tabernacle on earth he will pollute and defile; his tabernacle in heaven he cannot reach with his hands, but with his mouth he revileth it, and all who dwell therein, thus giving expression to the malignant feelings of him who has just been cast down from thence in the great conflict with Michael and his angels. “Pride compasseth him about as a chain, violence covereth him as a garment, his eyes

stand out with fatness, he has more than heart can wish, he is corrupt, he speaks wickedly concerning oppression, he speaks loftily, he sets his mouth against the heavens, and his tongue walketh through the earth, and he asks, how does God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" He is not afraid to speak evil of dignities, even of the highest dignity in the universe, the former and maker of all things; and prospers while he does so, but he shall be brought into desolation as in a moment, for God shall despise his image.

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

Daniel declares of him that "he shall wear out the saints of the Most High," "that he shall destroy the mighty and the holy people," that they shall fall by the sword, and by flame (fire-arms), by captivity, and by spoil." Antichrist sends his armies as a flood after the woman who brought forth the man-child, to cause her to be carried away of the flood, but the earth shall help the woman, and shall open her mouth, and swallow up the flood; by means of Antichrist, the dragon shall make war with the remnant of this woman's seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. It will be a time of grievous persecution of the Church of God, when whosoever departeth from evil will make himself a prey, for men will put good for evil, and evil for good. Power also shall be given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations; he shall be universal monarch; partial resistance he will meet with, especially toward the close of his short reign, but on

the whole his authority will be unquestioned, for the ten kingdoms into which Christendom will then be clearly sub-divided, will agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

“ And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

He shall declare himself to be God, and shall absolutely be acknowledged as God by all, except the few who were chosen of God before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love ; and these were written in the Lamb's book of life, known of God from everlasting ; all but these shall bow the knee to Antichrist, and receive his mark in their right hand or in their forehead.

“ If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity ; he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

There is a special demand on our attention by these words, “ if any man have an ear, let him hear,” and it is spoken with reference to the words which follow, and which are to form the groundwork of patience on the part of the saints, viz., that their enemies who lead them into captivity shall themselves go into captivity, while those whom they have led into captivity shall be set free, for this is one of the first objects of attention on the part of the Redeemer when he comes to his kingdom, viz., to “ set at liberty the

captives," and it is further a reason why they should not take up the sword in their own defence, "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword;" or, as here said, "he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." The servants of God must be as sheep among wolves, they may flee from them, but must not resist them, but be like their divine master, "who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."

As the first beast is a man, so also is the second, and is called in another place "the false prophet who wrought miracles before him." The explanation as to his coming up out of the earth will be deferred until the proper time for explaining the statement regarding the first beast, of whom it is said that he ascendeth out of the bottomless pit. He had two horns like a lamb, to signify that his outward aspect was mild and gentle, while his words were such as indicated the most fearful depravity; he could speak the most blasphemous things in the quietest possible way, and without the least provocation.

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them who dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

This person does not seem, like Antichrist himself, to have gradually risen to eminence, but recommends himself to immediate notice by his miraculous powers, and is at once installed into the highest office of

principal minister of state. "He exercises all the power of the first beast before him," not for the purpose of subverting or undermining that power, but of strengthening it ; he supports him in his blasphemous pretensions, and issues his mandate, under regal sanction, to all the world, commanding all men everywhere to render to him divine homage ; and in order that this homage may be voluntary, and not by constraint, he proceeds to give amazing proofs of his right to issue such a command, such proofs as will convince the whole world (the elect of God only excepted) that he, Antichrist, is the most high.

"He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of man."

Thus he equals that which Elijah proposed to the Israelites, as the test whether God or Baal should be reckoned the true God. The God that answereth by fire let him be God. Here then is a God answering by fire, and thereby demonstrating that he is God. This was not a false, or pretentious, but a real miracle wrought by the power of Satan, who could no doubt have brought fire on Baal's sacrifice, but on that occasion was not permitted by God : when permission is given him, his power is great, as is witnessed by his miracles through the magicians of Egypt, so also when the hedge of protection was removed from Job and his house, what powers of mischief he displayed ; he brought a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house where Job's sons and daughters were feasting, and it fell and crushed the inmates to death. He is declared to be the prince of the power of the air, and this can be no unmeaning word when used by the pen of inspiration.

“ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live.”

The intention of the miracles is to delude and deceive mankind, and in this he is successful even to his most sanguine wishes. He enacts a law that a great image or statue should be erected to the honour of his master, an image such as was erected by Nebuchadnezzar, who is the type of Antichrist. “ Nebuchadnezzar the king made such an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits ; he set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon, and commanded all his princes, governors, and subordinate authorities to assemble together to the dedication of his image.” “ And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then an herald cried aloud, to you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up : and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” All obeyed the mandate, and prostrated themselves before the golden image, excepting only Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So shall it be with the image set up by Antichrist, and that most probably not by constraint, but of their own free will, seeing that this image is endowed with powers which did not belong to the type, for “ he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that

“as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” • It is easy to understand that the power which spake of old through the oracles of idolatrous Rome, and thereby attained so complete an ascendancy over men—being permitted of God—will be able to give animation to this image, and thus induce the deluded multitudes to worship the pretended deity: within this is the working of Satan, “with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2nd Thessalonians, 9th to 12th verse.

“And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

An enactment is passed, enjoining all, without distinction of rank, age, or sex, to receive a certain impression or seal, either upon their forehead or in their right hand; a brand so impressed as to be irremovable; an indelible print by which all should be recognized, not only as loyal subjects, but as believers in the divinity of Antichrist, and of the strange God which he had set up and commanded to be worshipped, whom he designates by the title of “the God of forces,” whom he honours with gold, silver, and precious stones, “for thus shall he do in the most strongholds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge

and increase with glory.” This strange God is the dragon himself ; and the seal which all receive is the acknowledgement of him as God, and no interchange of commodities or dealings are permitted but with such as have the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred three score and six.”

Herein is manifested wisdom on the part of him who can decipher from these mystical figures the name of the beast; for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred three score and six. These figures can be formed into different names, but the most usually received is the word “Lateinos,” and points to the head of the Roman state ; not to the Pope, who at the time of Antichrist will be the head of the ecclesiastical, but not the civil head of the state. Thus Antichrist will be the king of the modern Babylon, king of Rome, and the seat of the beast will be Rome.

There are three typical representatives of Antichrist—two of these are from the Scriptures—viz., Pharaoh, king of Egypt, in the time of Moses, and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon ; there is also another, and perhaps a still more striking type than either of the two now mentioned, who appeared in the time of the Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria. The following, respecting this person, is extracted from Watt’s Catechism of Scripture History :—“Antiochus Epiphanes, who for some imaginary slight and disrespect, and under pretext of charging

the Jews with revolting from his allegiance, in consequence of some tumult which had occurred in the City of Jerusalem, put to death great numbers, ordering his soldiers to spare neither young nor old, so that in the space of three days not fewer than eighty thousand were destroyed. This wicked prince was countenanced in his vices by the then high priest, Menelaus, who conducted him into the temple, when he took away the remaining holy vessels, the altar of incense, the golden table, and the candlestick ; he tore off the golden ornaments of the temple, and robbed it of the hidden treasures—he offered a large sow (that unclean and forbidden beast) on the altar of burnt-offering—and left Jerusalem overwhelmed in blood and mourning. Two years after he sent Apollonius, his collector of tribute, with a thousand men, who fell suddenly on the city on the Sabbath day, while they were at worship, and slew the citizens and the priests. He made the sacrifices cease, led the women and children captive, pulled down the houses and the walls, built a castle or fortress on a high hill in the City of David, over against the temple, to overlook and annoy them, and placed a garrison therein, and laid up the spoils of the city there. Antiochus further issued out an order that all his dominions should be of one religion, chiefly with the intention of distressing the Jews ; he forbade their children to be circumcized, and forbade all burnt-offerings and sacrifices in the Temple of the God of Israel : he called it the temple of Jupiter Olympius, and set up his image on the altar, and sacrificed to it ; he commanded the people to profane the Sabbath ; he set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols throughout the cities, and required them to offer the flesh of swine, and other unclean beasts ; and he destroyed the books of the law wherever they were found, and executed very great cruelties on,

all the Jews that fell into his hands, who would not forsake the law of Moses. This image of Jupiter, set up on the altar by Antiochus Epiphanes, was the type of the abomination that maketh desolate, which our Saviour refers to, as spoken by Daniel. Abomination is the common name for an idol in the Old Testament, and when such are set up in the sanctuary, it may well be called desolation, for the priests are driven away, and the true worship of God ceases." This Antiochus Epiphanes is called by some the Jewish Antichrist, because many of his acts bore the closest resemblance to those which are predicted of the real Antichrist by the prophet Daniel in the 11th chapter, and also by the Apostle John in the Apocalypse. Antiochus Epiphanes is undoubtedly intended of God to typify the Man of Sin who shall be revealed in the last time, when transgressors are come to the full, if, indeed, he be not the Man of Sin himself, *permitted of God to ascend from the bottomless pit* to repeat the enormities of his former life, and carry into execution the things predicted of him; *nor should* this be deemed incredulous, seeing that God has, in the person of Elijah, prepared and made ready for himself a fit instrument for the accomplishment of his purposes, in the close of the dispensation; and to this end, having carried him up bodily by a whirlwind into heaven, he there remains, until the time appointed for his manifestation to Israel as the messenger of God, and the herald and forerunner of Messiah. In every age God has raised up instruments fitted for his purposes. Such was Pharaoh, of whom God declared, "for this cause have I raised thee up, that my power might be shown in thee, and that my name might be declared unto the ends of the earth." If then, it pleased God to select a man, eminent among the servants of God, and to preserve him in life for a

great future purpose, why should it be thought incredible, that he, may, in his all-wise providence, have a counterpart to this, in the selection of one, pre-eminent in crime, and unequalled in cruelty, as his selected instrument for so conspicuous a part in the concluding drama. Whether Antiochus Epiphanes be that man is not revealed, but that the Antichrist who is to be is now in existence, the Scripture clearly shows, inasmuch as he is declared to be the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, both in the 11th chapter and in the 17th. "He was" (i. e., was, before the date on which these visions were beheld, in the Isle of Patmos), "and is not" (i. e., not now in the world), "and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (viz., at the time of the end, when he shall be revealed as the son of perdition, who exalteth himself above all that is called God), "and go into perdition" (at the appearing of the Lord, when the beast shall be taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him: these both shall be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone). The angel explains that there are seven kings, and that he is one of them, and although one of the seven, he is the eighth; but if the eighth, how could he be of the seven? except on the supposition that he was, and is not, and yet shall be. He is one of seven kings, of whom five are fallen, and one is (that is, is now reigning), and the other (that is the seventh), is not yet come, and when he cometh, he must continue a short space, and the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. If he be of the seven, he cannot be the then reigning monarch, neither the one that was to follow, for the angel declares of him that he was—he must therefore be—one of the five that are fallen! that is who are deceased—but whether those five re-

ferred to the Emperors of Rome immediately preceding the existing ruler, is uncertain—for it is not revealed—the angel simply declaring that there are seven kings, five of them dead, one living, and one not yet come, and that the beast who is to be hereafter would be one of those seven that had been. If it could be ascertained who these five kings apply to, there might then be less difficulty in fixing on him who is to re-appear as the Man of Sin, but whoever he was, or by what name he was known, he will himself, on his return to the world, be perfectly conscious of his past history, and will glory in it; probably attributing his deliverance from the pit to his own super-human prowess, and thus seizing on the circumstance to strengthen his other claims on the people to divine homage, “for they that dwell on the earth shall wonder when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” The Antichrist, then, of the last days, is a person, and one who existed in a previous generation, and as Elijah was bodily conveyed to heaven, that he might come again bodily, as the harbinger of Messiah, so has Antichrist been bodily conveyed down to hell—to the bottomless pit—and there he at present remains, until the period arrive when he shall be permitted to ascend out of the bottomless pit, and re-appear upon the earth, and go into perdition. But as Elijah from heaven shall not be alone, but shall have a companion, even Moses, “for these are the two olive trees that stand before the God of the earth,” so shall Antichrist have also a companion in wickedness, who shall, like himself, proceed from the bottomless pit; for, says John, “I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth.” As Antichrist himself shall come up from the regions below, so also shall the false prophet that wrought miracles before him; and neither of them twain shall

return thither, but they both shall be cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone—the first occupants of Gehenna, the hell of torments; whether Satan and his angels shall not come until the thousand years are finished, and the final rebellion of mankind is crushed. Antichrist and his minister had already passed into Hades, and from thence emerged; there is for them no further intermediate stage, but they are sent direct to Gehenna, the ultimate destiny of all who live ungodly.

“NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM,” OR THE HOROSCOPE OF TIME.

The first distinct intimation which we have in Scripture of the approaching termination of the world as it now is, comes from the prophet Daniel. All the prophets declare that the time is near, but nothing definite is stated, by which to form an accurate estimate of the period that would really elapse until “the kingdom of heaven should come,” and “time be no longer.” The words, “a little while,” as applicable to the intervening period, although perfectly true in the eye of Him to whom a thousand years are as one day, carry a certain degree of indefiniteness as to the number of years which have to run their course before the actual introduction of the great epoch; and there exists a craving in the mind for some more tangible data on which to rest, and God, who knows the heart, and who has implanted this desire in man to forecast the future, has been graciously pleased to meet it in this wonderful dream which was given to Nebuchadnezzar. That it was from God, is put beyond all doubt by the subsequent revelation of it to Daniel, to whom also it was interpreted.

“The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.” From it we learn that the world in its present form is to be of short duration, being limited within a comparatively brief period. The interpretation of the dream, as respects the image, is nearly fulfilled. The kingdoms have come, and are gone. The present position of the image, and the little of it that remains, clearly show that the end is not distant. The dream related to a great image which stood before the king, whose brightness was excellent, and the form thereof was terrible. The image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron, and part of clay. Nebuchadnezzar continued looking on the image in his dream, until a fresh object appeared before him. A stone cut out of the mountain without hands smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron, and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This was the dream, and the interpretation was as follows:—“Thou, O King, art a King of Kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it

break in pieces, and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided ; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with the miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken (weak). And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men ; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." The dream was from God, and was revealed, along with its interpretation, to Daniel, in a night vision. By it we are enabled to form a near approximation as to the time when the present world shall end, and the world to come (i. e., the kingdom of God) shall begin. The head of the image represented the Babylonian Monarchy, and terminated in the lifetime of Daniel himself. The Mædo-Persian Monarchy, signified by the breast and the arms of silver, was of longer continuance ; then followed the Grecian or Macedonian Empire, represented by the belly and thighs of brass ; and after it the dominion of Rome, so strikingly symbolized by the legs of iron. These were the four monarchies which in succession were predetermined to have their existence, and each to exceed in duration its predecessor ; but all are now gone, the head, the breast and arms, the belly and thighs, and lastly the legs ; all have disappeared, all but the feet. The monarchy in the Babylonian was universal ; so it was in the other succeeding monarchies, each in turn bear rule

over all the earth, and now the feet alone stand, being part of iron, and part of clay, a divided kingdom. The Roman Monarchy is parcelled out into a number of kingdoms, some of them strong as iron, and some of them weak as clay. At the time that Daniel interpreted the dream to Nebuchadnezzar, no part of the image had come into existence but the head only; at the present time no part remains but the feet only. The final adjustment or classification into ten kingdoms, as represented by the ten toes of the image, has yet to be realized, and this seems now in progress of fulfilment, by the stronger kingdoms absorbing the weaker; and this will go on until the definite number be completed, and no more nor fewer, that the words of God may be fulfilled; after which Antichrist in person will subdue three of the ten kingdoms, and incorporate them with his own (for they shall be plucked up by the roots); yet afterwards when he has reached to the zenith of his power, they are restored, on his obtaining from them as from the other seven kings, the full recognition of his supremacy. "For they shall agree and shall give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God be fulfilled." We have in Daniel still further particulars respecting events which shall take place when the kingdom shall be subdivided into ten distinct parts. The four monarchies are again brought, in the night visions, before the eye of the prophet, under the form of four beasts; the first, like a lion, representing the Babylonian; the second, like a bear, representing the Mædo-Persian; the third, like a leopard, representing the Grecian, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl, being the four divisions into which it came, on the death of Alexander, the first king. The fourth beast—dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, having great

iron teeth which devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it—being diverse from all the beasts that were before it, applies to that other power which bare rule for so many centuries over the whole world, even the Roman Government. The four beasts are explained to be four kingdoms, and the fourth to be the fourth kingdom upon earth which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And as the fourth beast had ten horns, so the explanation is, that the ten horns out of this kingdom, are ten kings that shall arise; and these ten kings arise long after the subdivision of the kingdom, and are identical with the ten toes of the great image seen in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In that dream, and in its interpretation, there is no allusion to Antichrist; it is simply intimated that in the days of those ten kings, the God of heaven would set up his kingdom; but subsequent visions are given, still more fully to clear up the events to be realized at the close of the dispensation. Antichrist, or the Man of Sin, occupies a conspicuous place. He is first spoken of in the 7th chapter; while Daniel in his vision was considering the ten horns upon the fourth beast, while he beheld, there came up among them another little horn. In his origin he was little, "a vile person," to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. After his accession to a throne, his progress in subduing kingdom after kingdom will be rapid; and three of the first ten will be added and conjoined with his own small territory, so as to give it increased dimensions, and enable its monarch to take his stand as one of the first-rate powers, and then as with the arms of a flood shall nation after nation be overthrown before him, until

he has reached the pinnacle of his ambition, as the supreme ruler of the world. That the little horn which came up after the ten, and before which three of the ten was plucked up by the roots, is the Antichrist of the Revelations, the explanation given by the Angel clearly shows : for "he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws ; and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of a time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion ; and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him : all which exactly accords with the description given of him in 13th of Rev. Again, in another vision, still further particulars are communicated : he saw in his vision a ram which had two horns, and after him an he goat with a notable horn between his eyes ; he saw in his vision until this great or notable horn was broken, and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven, and out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land, and it waxed great, even to the host of heaven, and it cast down some of the host, and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them, yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, *and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away*, and the place of his (Jehovah's) sanctuary was cast down ; and an host was given him against the daily sacrifice, by reason of transgression (the transgression of the house of Israel), and it (the little horn, which is Antichrist) cast down the truth to the ground ; and it practised and prospered.

“ Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, how long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? i. e., what time shall elapse from the commencement of this work of desolation in giving both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot, until the evils are removed, and the sanctuary again be cleansed? And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shalt the sanctuary be cleansed. The interpretation of the vision to Daniel was that the ram with the two horns were the Kings of Media and Persia. The rough goat is the King of Greece; the notable horn between his eyes being the first king (Alexander). Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power (Alexander's four captains, who at his death divided his kingdom amongst them). The Angel then passes over the whole interval of time, from the division of the kingdom until the end, and says, “ in the latter time of their kingdom (after it has passed through many successions of kings), when transgressors are come to the full (thereby clearly indicating the period referred to), a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences (a ferociously wicked man, but with all possessed of consummate intelligence), shall stand up, and his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power (but by the power of the dragon, who gives unto him his power, and his seat, and great authority), and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people, and through his policy also, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by

peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the prince of princes (at the Battle of Armageddon), but he shall be broken without hand. "Whom the Lord will consume with the breath of his mouth, and destroy by the brightness of his coming." Without hand, signifying, not by human agency, even as the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, the living stone Jesus Christ, who shall break in pieces the kingdoms of the nations, as signified by the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold; by him shall the head of the confederacy of nations be broken, even this impersonation of wickedness, called in Scripture, the Man of Sin.

THE RESTORATION AND REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM (BEING IN PART A RECAPITULATION).

Daniel understood by books that the Lord would accomplish seventy years in the destruction of Jerusalem, and knowing that the time was about expired, he set his face to entreat the Lord his God that his anger and fury might be turned away from his city Jerusalem, his holy mountain; that he would cause it to be rebuilt, and make his face again to shine upon his sanctuary, which is desolate. In answer to Daniel's prayer, the Angel Gabriel came, by the direction of God, and not only satisfied him on the immediate subject of his request (the present restoration of the holy city), but at same time entered into the far larger matter of the future history of his people and nation, up until the consummation. Indirectly, the angel describes to Daniel a first and second coming of the Messiah: the first being sixty and two weeks of years from the commandment going forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and the second coming being seven weeks of years from the com-

mandment, a second time going forth, to restore and rebuild, after a much more lengthened period of desolation ; and it is to this second (and yet future restoration) that the words refer—"the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times," for then will the world be engaged in, or be on the eve of wars and rumours of wars ; all things indicating the approaching distress of nations with perplexity. Gabriel informs Daniel that in addition to these two periods of time here indicated, there would be a concluding week added to the number, and it the most eventful, for many reasons, and among others that there will be a great gathering of souls to the Lord, for it is said, "he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." In this week also will Antichrist be manifested as the supreme ruler of the earth, when he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease ; the sanctuary being made desolate for the third and last time ; and not fully cleansed and restored until 2300 days from the date of its desecration by Antichrist, who is here termed the desolator, because by him the holy place, as also the whole country, is made desolate. When the number of the days is fulfilled, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," and then shall the Lord of Hosts reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients, gloriously. Jerusalem shall then be "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth ;" it shall be "the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell among the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall they no more defile." The Lord will comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places, he will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord ; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

THE FALL OF ROME.

When the final subdivision of the Roman territory has taken place, and Antichrist's supremacy is universally recognized, the time has arrived for the sudden and irretrievable downfall of the Church of Rome. Upon her forehead, a name is written—"mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth." The Man of Sin, the scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, carried this woman. By his powerful influence she still maintained her power over the nations, although now deeply sunk in infidelity; but so soon as he has reached the summit of his ambition, and she is no longer necessary to the accomplishment of his designs, but rather an impediment in his path (because however corrupt she has become, there is still a semblance of worship of the true God, although mingled with many abominable idolatries; her system is therefore in contrariety to his, and must be overthrown), a secret conference is held with the ten sovereigns, and measures resolved on for her instantaneous overthrow, not only at Rome, the capital, but wherever her influence and power extend; her cathedrals and churches are demolished, her priests are slain, and every vestige of Popery destroyed, all which is declared in the concluding verses of the 17th chapter. "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings, one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." "The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God

hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." This great and long-continued system of false worship is now to be suddenly overthrown. The ten kings unite under the direction of their ruling head, and decree the instantaneous destruction of the Roman Hierarchy, each in his own respective kingdom. (For Antichrist is not the Papacy, but the destroyer of the Papacy; because she is an obstacle in his path, and God makes use of him for her destruction.) At this crisis the Church of Rome will have but a feeble hold upon the minds of men. The zeal that once inspired her multitudes will have passed away, and infidelity—which, while it is an enemy to real godliness, is also so to every form or semblance of it—will have assumed such dimensions in those days when transgressors are to come to the full, that the downfall of the Church of Rome will be a comparatively easy matter. "Her plagues shall come in one day; death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." "In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Antichrist, now assured of the stability of his throne, divests himself of the hollow mask of Popish piety, and assuming his defiant attitude of blasphemy against the Most High, tramples under foot every form of worship which has not himself for its object. In past times God would have healed Babylon, but she would not, refusing even to acknowledge that she had need of healing; declaring herself to be incapable of error, while plunging deeper and deeper into its mazes;

glorifying herself, and living deliciously, saying, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."

"The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

That great city doubtless is Rome; no other city then reigned over the kings of the earth; no other could present itself to the mind of the prophet, when thus explained to him by the angel. The name of Babylon is given to it by the Apostle Peter; in his Epistle, he says, "the church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you." The Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar was at that time a ruin. To the City of Rome therefore can the term alone apply, where was a church watered abundantly through the labours of the Apostles and others; but soon after their decease the gold became dim, and the fine gold changed; the silver became dross, and the wine mixed with water. Even in the lifetime of the Apostles did grievous wolves enter in among them, not sparing the flock; also of their own selves did men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. So early as the first and second centuries, heresies appeared, and like weeds in a garden, neglected, thickly spread among them; every succeeding century records greatly increased declensions from the pure faith, which at the beginning, was delivered to the Saints. The Church at Rome (perhaps from being placed in the capital city) soon began to assert a priority and headship over all the other churches, and impregnated them all with her errors; her Bishop assumed, and has maintained the power to make and unmake all other bishops and presbyters; her doctrines are wholly corrupt, and their vitality gone. The gospel is made void, and is become

another gospel, which is not the power of God unto salvation, neither is it possessed of any power to free the souls of men from the fetters of sin. The Church of Rome bears not the most distant resemblance to her ancient self, but is become wholly corrupt ; arrayed in purple in the person of her Pope ; in scarlet in the persons of her Cardinals ; and decked with gold and precious stones ; but the cup in her hand (the cup raised to the lips of her priests) is full of abominations, declared to be the blood of Christ, not in symbol, but in reality, thus perverting the Scripture, and turning the truth of God into a lie—an idolatrous lie ; for the people fall down before it and worship it. Thus the cup designed of God to be the cup of blessing, is become a cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication ; and with her “ the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication ; ” inflamed with their idolatry as men drunk with wine. Her name is “ mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” This great judgment on Rome, will, we repeat, be accomplished when Antichrist has attained to the height of his ambition as supreme head of the nations : by him, and the ten kings who combine together with him for her destruction, acting in concert, simultaneously in the different kingdoms where they govern. To this combined and simultaneous movement is to be attributed the sudden celerity of her downfall, “ for her plagues shall come in one day ; death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire ; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.” Antichrist will now reign undisturbed, and every knee will bow to him ; but toward the conclusion of his brief reign the king of the south shall push at him, but his opposition shall be feeble,

for Antichrist shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships, and he shall enter into the countries, and overflow and pass over, and shall enter also into the glorious land (the land of Palestine), and by him shall the nation be scattered and peeled, meted out, and trodden down ("whose land the rivers have spoiled"), "for the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory; and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks, and he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel." He will suspect some secret counterplotting against his authority by the Jewish nation, from the ships of Chittim having come against him, for, on the intelligence reaching him, he is angry, and returns, and has indignation against the holy covenant. He sets his face against the holy land, and having there also his secret emissaries—men who have forsaken the holy covenant, and have proved false to their God and to their country. With them he has secret intelligence, and thus renders the conquest of their country an easy prey; he enters the territory of Judea, and arms stand on his part. The capital is entered with triumph, and his first step is to pollute the sanctuary of strength, and to take away the daily sacrifice, and to place the abomination that maketh desolate. We have said that this shall take place toward the conclusion of his reign, and that from this date his reign as the Antichrist really commences, when he sets himself down on that throne which belongs to Christ, and from which he shall speedily be overthrown. It is at this crisis that the events recorded in the 11th chapter of Revelation

commence, and it is at this crisis also that the events recorded in the 12th chapter have their fulfilment. The 13th chapter contains the account of Antichrist, of his reign, and of his doings during the same eventful, but brief period; and it is to this hour that the Lord particularly directs the attention of his disciples, saying, "when ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains," &c. All the true sons of Israel are enjoined to mark this peculiar event, "the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place," and to regard it as the appointed signal for instant flight to the distant mountains, to a place of security prepared for them by God, under the conduct of two distinguished leaders; a place unassailable by Antichrist and his armies, for the earth will open her mouth and swallow up those he sends in pursuit of them, like as the sea engulphed the armies of Pharaoh. There shall the sealed twelve tribes remain in security until the day dawn, and the day star arise; until the sixth angel pour out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof be dried up that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared; and then they shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, but meanwhile, and during this brief time of great trouble, this is the word of the Lord to them, "come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast, for behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more

cover her slain." As the church in the wilderness had fled from the face of Pharaoh, so have these now fled from the face of the antitype of Pharaoh; and as their God had prepared two leaders to conduct them, as it is said, "I brought you on eagles wings," so now he will bear them as of old by his two prophets, mentioned in the 11th chapter, the two olive trees who stand by the God of the earth. "*The two witnesses*"—the first of whom is Elijah, who was caught up to heaven by a whirlwind, and has been there preserved ever since; he will appear again upon the earth before that day of the Lord comes, "to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord; to say, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." This Elijah shall then come as the herald of the Lord, and shall "restore all things;" he will restore the Jewish worship, the statutes, the judgments, the ordinances, and laws; and so he must of necessity be a very considerable time before his Master, for this will not be the work of a day, nor a year; but as Moses was forty years with the children of Israel, so is it probable that a time somewhat similar in length may be required to prepare this people—such of them as will be prepared—to dwell with "the devouring fire, and with the everlasting burnings," for the presence of the Lord will be such as none but the pure in heart shall be able to look on him. Elijah is introduced (as might have been expected) into this book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ at the eleventh

chapter, at that precise period when Antichrist, having reached the zenith of his power, assumes to himself the blasphemous attribute of deity, and from which his reign as Antichrist commences. At the sametime, the prophesy of the two witnesses commence ; and at the sametime, the sealed ones flee from the face of Antichrist, and Jerusalem is trodden under foot of the Gentiles. This is the remarkable period so frequently named under different forms, as a time, times and a half, as forty and two months, and as twelve hundred and sixty days.

Verse 3, chapter 11th.—“ And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth.”

I will give power, as Jesus promised to his disciples, saying, “ ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you,” and with great “ power ” “ gave the Apostles witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus ; ” so the power conveyed to these two witnesses is divine power, as manifested in the works which they did during the time of their testimony. “ Unto my two witnesses ”—the names of neither are given—but that they are two individuals, is manifest from the 10th verse, where they are declared to be two prophets. That one of these witnesses is Elijah, seems evident from this, that the supernatural works done by him are precisely such as he did when on earth the first time, which works were then the type of what he is now to do on a greatly enlarged scale. Before Elijah went up to heaven, there were signs and wonders done by him, such as had not been done in any previous age. But who is the other witness? who is this companion endowed with equal powers, and filled

with equal zeal and devotedness to the service of the Most High? Although not furnished with such clear proofs as to predicate with certainty, yet there are not wanting strong probable indications that that other distinguished servant of God, is Moses, a man whom God greatly honoured in a past age of the world; of whom it is testified "that there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel." Moses did not, like Elijah, go into heaven, for it is recorded that he died in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord; but there is a mystery connected with his burial, which can only be explained by some future intention with respect to him. He was buried by God himself, and had no attendant mourner besides, and no man knoweth of his sepulchre until this day. There appears also to have been a contention between the powers of light and darkness, as to the right of possession of his body. He who has the power of death, viz., the devil, asserted his right to the possession of the body of Moses, and contended for it with Michael the Archangel, who refused to recognize his right, and said, "the Lord rebuke thee." The great probability, and indeed natural inference from this is, that the body of Moses did not decompose and see corruption, for, if otherwise, there could have been no necessity for this contention. There is also another remarkable fact which seems to connect and associate Moses with Elijah in this great work, and that is the circumstance of these two appearing in joint-companionship as attendants on the Lord on that memorable night,

when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was bright as the light. There is doubtless intended of God some purpose in their appearing *visibly* at all at such a moment—seen and recognized, although never seen before by Peter, and James, and John—and no other purpose seems to commend itself so forcibly as this, that God intended it to be known that these two distinguished prophets should together be associated at the close of the dispensation in preparing a “first fruits” unto God and unto the Lamb. In the wonders and signs which are done by these two prophets, they are but the repetition of signs and wonders done by them in a past age of the world, for Elijah shut heaven that it rained not; and Moses had power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with plagues. Concerning Enoch, it is said that by faith he was translated, that he should not see death. Thus there was one exception to the universal rule, that in Adam all die; so in the case of Moses it may please God for an extraordinary purpose that he should twice taste of death, as indeed did Lazarus and others, who were raised from the dead by our Lord himself, and by Elijah, Elisha, and Peter. Assuming then that these two prophets are none other than Moses and Elijah sent down from heaven, what a mighty transformation! might be effected with the divine blessing under such teachers. These are Jehovah’s two great witnesses, witnessing for him in the worst age of the world, and in the worst time of that worst age, even when transgressors are come to the full, and just before the time when the command shall go forth, “put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get ye down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great.” “And they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” Their prophesy is to

last while, and during the time that the holy city is trodden under foot of the Gentiles, viz., forty and two months. That this is a literal, and not a figurative period, many reasons have already been adduced to show, but the time at which the prophesy takes place, being at the very end of the dispensation, forbids the idea of its being other than literal, as does the whole of the context; for if these are two individual men—and they are distinctly declared so to be in the 10th verse—the time of their prophesying must be days and not years. “Clothed in sackcloth,” because the burden of their prophesy will be of mourning, lamentation, and woe. “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the voice of the great angel who has yet to sound;” for the second woe shall soon be past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly. “These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.” This is not the first announcement concerning these servants of God, and this verse is introduced as if intended to set us a searching to find among the prophets further light respecting them, and this we have in the 4th chapter of Zechariah, where it is written, “and the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, what seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof; and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake unto the angel that talked with me, saying, what are these my Lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, knowest thou not what these be? And I

said, no my Lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, this is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts, who art thou O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, grace, grace, unto it. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of the house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven, they are the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth. Then answered I, and said unto him, what are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, what be these two olive branches, which, through the two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me, and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, no, my Lord. Then said he, these are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." It is quite manifest that Zechariah and John are alluding to the same persons. The angel to Zechariah declares that they are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth; and the angel, or rather the Lord himself, to John, says concerning these—his two witnesses—that they are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth; and that they are two individuals, as has been said, is evident from the 10th verse, where they are named two prophets. "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out

of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies, and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." It will be recollected in the past history of Elijah, that the king of Israel sent fifty men to apprehend him, whom they found on a mountain cleft, and by their captain commanded him in the name of the king to come down. Elijah having signified his wish that fire should come down from heaven and destroy them, it was immediately done, and the same with a subsequent fifty, and might have been the same with as many thousands, had there been necessity for the sacrifice. This was typical of the last days, when the same Elijah and Moses will prophecy in the midst of a generation pre-eminent for vice. While the days of their prophecy continue, no power can harm them ; every effort to apprehend them, every attempt made to destroy them, will only recoil on their enemies with certain destruction. Fire proceedeth out of their mouth, i.e., they speak but the word, and the fire of God instantly consumes such as would hurt them. They will be miraculously preserved by God, and enabled, with great boldness, to bear their testimony in the midst of their enemies. "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy." The days of their prophecy being three years and a half, corresponds exactly with the type in the case of Elijah, as it is written, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain : and it rained not on the earth, by the space of three years and six months." Thus again by the same agent, heaven is shut, and for the same period, "And have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will." Here also is the prototype of that which was done by Moses, in the day when God brought up

Israel from the land of Egypt ; thus what Moses did to the Egyptians, and what Elijah did to idolatrous Israel, were but types of judgments with which the nations shall be visited during the time of their prophecy. "And when they shall have finished their testimony," not until, just as John the Baptist was protected until his testimony was finished, and being finished, he sealed his testimony with his blood ; so likewise these distinguished servants of God are not shorn of their strength until they have finished the days allotted for their prophecy, and then for a moment their sun shall disappear behind a cloud, only to reappear with a lustre which will never again be obscured, "they shall shine forth as the brightness of the sun in the kingdom of their father." "The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them," This is the first time that mention is made of the beast in this book ; it is the same beast who is seen to rise up out of the sea, or from the body of the people, and who is also seen upbearing, or supporting, or carrying the woman, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth ; he was (that is, he existed in a former generation), he is not (not upon the earth, but in hell, i.e., the bottomless pit, out of which he shall ascend, and, by permission of God, reappear on earth, just as Elijah was in a former generation), and is not (not on earth, but in heaven), but shall descend out of heaven by command of God, and reappear upon the earth. We know for certain that this shall be so as it respects Elijah, and it is equally plainly declared that Antichrist shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, which itself is a testimony to his previous existence, but this is expressly stated to be the case in the 17th chapter. The beast that thou

sawest was, and is not ; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition. The bowels of the earth—that fearful cavity—is the present prison of lost souls, and will be hereafter the Gehenna or hell of the condemned ; and it is justly named bottomless, from the circumstance of its unceasing rotatory movement, so that no body cast into it could ever reach its bottom ; ever falling, sometimes with great, and sometimes with diminished rapidity, according to its proximity to the centre ; darker than midnight, because no ray of light ever enters from sun, or moon, or stars. In this fearful abode is placed the Man of Sin, waiting his time for release to do his work of unequalled crime and wickedness upon the earth, and then to be with his great associate in crime, the first occupants of hell fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. It shall be just at the close of his short-lived reign that he shall obtain power to overcome, and to put to death, the two standing witnesses for God. These two men, sent down from heaven, were the standard which the spirit of God raised up when the enemy came in as a flood, but now that standard being removed, and he who let, or hindered, or kept back the tide of iniquity, being taken out of the way, wickedness undisguised, will, for the moment, ride rampant upon the earth, and the time be come to put in the sickle, and reap the harvest of the earth, and cast it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. “ And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” Our Lord was crucified in Jerusalem, and it is at that particular crisis filled with Gentiles, worshippers of Antichrist, given up to work all uncleanness with greediness, and therefore spiritually or figuratively called Sodom and Egypt. There in Jerusalem, where

our Lord was crucified, shall these his two most distinguished witnesses be put to death. "And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves." They lie exposed upon the street, partly because deemed unworthy of burial, and partly to satisfy the morbid curiosity of the multitudes who must have heard of their fame: two men standing alone as witnesses for God, and having power for a period of three years and a half to put to instant death all who would stretch out the hand to hurt them, and who during that period, would, by simply lifting up the rod to heaven, as Moses did of old, call down upon earth's guilty inhabitants many and greivous plagues; but now they were overcome by Antichrist, and killed; and this circumstance must raise him still higher in the estimation of the people, and to make them shout still louder from end to end of the earth, "who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwell upon the earth." The time for this boisterous mirth and festivity must of necessity be extremely short, and yet with the greatly increased facilities for communication by telegraphic wire, the announcement of this greatest of victories by Antichrist himself, may have been flashed through the civilized world in a single day, and gifts and presents be at least on their way to all parts, in commemoration of this splendid achievement of their great head. But how short-lived is the triumph of the wicked. God is about to do a marvellous thing on the earth, for now these two prophets (of whom among women *two* greater had not appeared) are to arise from the dead

without seeing corruption. "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon those who saw them." The time of their unbroken testimony was three years and a half, and the time they lay dead, three days and a half—a day for a year—when that same glorious Spirit who raised up our Lord Jesus from the dead, and who will also quicken all his saints at the appearing of Jesus, now enters into them, and in a moment recalls them to life, not to life in the flesh, like Lazarus, but to that kind of life which Christ received on his resurrection, fashioned like unto his glorified body, over which death hath no more dominion. They stand upon their feet to the amazement and terror of the hundreds—it may be thousands—of spectators, who a minute before had been glorying over them, and possibly abusing their lifeless bodies while they lay in the street—probably the principal street—of the great city (called great because it is the city of the great king). "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." It does not appear that they uttered a single word—the time of their testimony was past—their work was finished, and the hour had arrived for their reward, and that reward an "exceeding great and an eternal weight of glory;" although to them, as to all others, the reward is of grace and not of debt; for the one universal voice of all the redeemed for ever and ever shall be, "not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory." They heard a great voice from heaven—not the voice of an angel, but the voice of the Almighty God—saying unto them, "come up hither," and as the Lord ascended up to heaven, and was seen by his disciples until a cloud received him

out of their sight, so they now ascend up to heaven, in the sight, not of their friends, for there were none there, but in the sight of their enemies, "for their enemies beheld them."

"And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand, and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."

At this time Jerusalem is in the possession of the Gentiles, Antichrist reigns, having polluted the sanctuary of strength, exhibiting himself as God. He is the "abomination that maketh desolate" (for idols and false Gods are in Scripture termed "abomination"). He has prevailed against the two prophets who tormented them that dwelt upon the earth, but with this victory his short-lived reign in effect terminates, for now commence a series of judgments of unprecedented magnitude, beginning at Jerusalem with a great earthquake, in which the tenth part of the city is suddenly overthrown, and seven thousand of the inhabitants slain. All this takes place on the day and hour that the witnesses, having returned to life, were seen to go up to heaven. Consternation and amazement seize upon the multitudes, who are constrained to admit the hand of God, and, for the moment, to give glory to the God of heaven. This earthquake precedes the great tribulation, viz., "the seven vials full of the wrath of God," before entering on which it is necessary to return to the hundred and forty-four thousand, who are to form the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. At the time when they shall appear on Mount Zion, as related in the 14th chapter, they have attained to innocency, and are

without fault before the throne of God ; and this has been accomplished, not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord, through the instrumentality of these two witnesses, who thus make ready a people prepared for the Lord, a candlestick all of gold, with its seven lamps, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, into which pipes God's two anointed ones empty the golden oil out of themselves, and thus are the seven lamps of the golden candlestick kept burning with the lustre of heaven's own light. One stood upon the right side of the bowl, which was upon the top of the candlestick, and the other on the left side, and thus continually ministered the Spirit (as signified by the golden oil), by whom the light of truth and the fire of love was kept burning. This continuing day by day with the restored ordinances of the Jewish service, not now understood in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit, the whole groweth up unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. The great mountain is levelled to a plain ; every high thought, and everything within every breast which exalteth itself against Christ, is subdued, and the headstone thereof is brought forth with shoutings of grace, grace unto it ; to the praise of the glory of his grace in its origin, in its continuance, and in its consummation. This great work of preparing a people for the Lord was true of John the Baptist, inasmuch as many, through his ministry, were prepared to receive him ; but John the Baptist was not Elias, but the type or foreshowing of the true Elias who will restore all things, as at the first, and say, "remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments." When Elias himself shall come, it will be in great fulness of the spirit, and of power, turning the hearts of the

fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; and as a greater had not been born of woman than John the Baptist, from the high honour of his position as herald to the Son of God in his first appearing, so shall these two olive trees be, who stand before the God of the whole earth; the most distinguished position ever held by any of Adam's race, as is evident, from the circumstance, that they alone of that race shall taste of death without seeing corruption; the holy one of God alone excepted. Such shall be the honour conferred on the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth, to distinguish them from all others, and to whom very probably may be assigned that highest position which the two Apostles aspired to, but could not obtain the promise of, "for to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but (to those) for whom it is prepared of my Father." By these two servants of the most high God, a people are prepared among the twelve tribes, but are hated of their brethren, as Isaiah writes, "your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name sake, said, let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." This work of preparation by Moses and Elijah will be progressing long before the manifestation of Antichrist, as we find them already sealed of God, before any of the trumpet judgments. It is probable that the forty years in the wilderness was the type of a period yet to come, when Jehovah will again bear them on eagle's wings, and plead with them there; for thus saith the Lord of hosts, "behold, I will melt them and try them, for what shall I do for the daughter of my people." The Lord will purge them as gold and silver, and to this end, "that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and

Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." When Antichrist has commenced his brief career as supreme head of the nations, one of his first objects will be to crush this infant work of God, being instigated thereto by the serpent, called the Devil and Satan, and this leads us to pass over the remaining events of the 11th chapter, proceeding to the 12th chapter, the first six verses.

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven,
a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon
under her feet ; and upon her head a crown
of twelve stars."

There are only two women spoken of in this book, and of the one it is explained that "the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," so the other is that great city which spiritually (i. e., during the period while she is trodden under foot of the Gentiles) is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified, viz., Jerusalem. She is now described, not as she has been, not as she is, but as she shall be, when the name of the city from that day forth shall be "the Lord is there;" when Jerusalem shall be the "throne of the Lord," the city of the great king, "the perfection of beauty, and the joy of the whole earth." It is to Jerusalem, in the age of her glory, that this description, as in the first verse, applies ; a woman clothed with the sun. These words will receive an almost literal fulfilment, for the glorious light which emanates from the person of the Son of God is "above the brightness of the sun, and will perpetually illuminate Jerusalem, so that the sun shall be no more thy light by day ; neither for brightness shall the

moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." The glorious presence of our Redeemer in the city which he will choose to place his name there, will cause a perpetual radiance of surpassing brightness, and thus it is written, "thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." This woman is Jerusalem, Jerusalem in her restored condition, in her permanent, her everlasting state. She is clothed with the sun, the sun of righteousness, while the moon, being under her feet, means that for brightness her light will no more be required. Her crown of twelve stars will be her children, the twelve tribes of Israel, all righteous, the branch of God's planting, which shall never be rooted up, the work of his hands wherein he will be glorified; each tribe walking in his uprightness, "for he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory will be a defence." The country will be divided into her twelve provinces, but Jerusalem will be the centre of unity, and the mother of "all their crown of glory and diadem of beauty." This will be the permanent, the enduring character of this great city, when, at the

return of Messiah, she is established as the princess among the provinces, and queen among the nations; but as yet her warfare is not accomplished, neither has she received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins ; her days of sorrow are not ended, nor will they end until the salvation of Israel shall come to Zion, but when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

“ And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

Jerusalem has long been a mourner, for her children have been perverse and rebellious against the Lord, yet, with illustrious exceptions ; and the brightest and most glorious of all is this child of whom she travailed in birth, and pained to be delivered ; for although our Lord was born in Bethlehem, yet the acknowledged right of parentage is Jerusalem, she is the mother of all. Jerusalem is a mother, for thus it is said, “ rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her all ye that love her. Rejoice for joy with her all ye that mourn for her, that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.” She is spoken of as a woman in travail. “ Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail.” Thus the passage, according to this view, is quite in accordance with the Scripture, figurative indeed, not so as to obscure, but to illustrate the meaning. The first verse describes Jerusalem as in her coming glory—which will be endless—and compared with which, the time of her affliction is in the eye of God but as a moment. “ For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies

will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy redeemer." The first, second, and fifth verses are intended to show who is meant by this woman, by an allusion to the birth of the brightest and best of her sons.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads."

This great red dragon is the Devil and Satan—he appears in heaven, for not until Antichrist's reign is he finally expelled. He goes about like a wandering comet among the sons of God ; as the accuser of the brethren. His seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns, denote the universality of his power and government as the "prince of this world."

"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth."

The fallen angels are called stars in the 8th chapter and 9th verse, and in the 9th chapter and 1st verse. "I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit." The holy angels are never spoken of as stars falling from heaven. The stars referred to are the angels who kept not their first estate, for when the devil is cast out into the earth his angels are cast out with him. They who have been drawn into their rebellion by him, now have to follow him in his downward career, first from heaven to *earth*, then into the bottomless pit, and finally into Gehenna, the hell of torments, *the place prepared for the devil and his angels*. Their number

is great, not fewer than the third part of the whole ; of whom the number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. We learn that two hundred millions of those fallen angels are employed in the execution of the sixth trumpet judgment, by which a third part of the human race are destroyed.

“ And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”

Satan had learned that the time was come that God should send forth his Son ; he therefore sought to frustrate the purpose of God, by having the infant destroyed as soon as he should be born—and this, by means of Herod, a man ready to act by his suggestions, being led captive at his will—and thus he stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

“ And she brought forth a man-child, who was (hereafter) to rule all nations with a rod of iron.”

This man-child was the Lord Jesus, to whom it is promised that “ he shall break the nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter’s vessel.

“ And her child was caught up unto God and his throne.”

This took place after his resurrection, when, in the sight of his apostles and others of his disciples, “ he ascended up to heaven to his Father, and to our Father, and to his God, and to our God.

“ And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

The preceding verses are given to enable us to identify the woman. The subject in hand is now resumed. Jerusalem is delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, to be trodden under foot; during which, and while the period lasts, she flies into the wilderness for safety. But is it consistent to speak of a city removing from one place to another? Under the figure of a woman it is so. Thus, in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, Jerusalem is represented, first as being desolate and forsaken by her children; again, she is spoken of as "dwelling among the heathen," and as being overtaken by her persecutors between the straits; so here also she is represented as taking her flight to a place prepared of God in the wilderness. As a hen gathereth her brood beneath her wings for their protection, so does Jerusalem gather her children, and flies with them for safety: and that her spiritual seed, and not her natural is meant, appears from the concluding verse of the chapter, where her seed are declared to be those who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The precise time when she is to take her flight, our Lord hath shown in his discourse on the last days, "when ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." This is not the compassing of Jerusalem with armies by Titus; on that occasion, indeed, the disciples of Jesus, who were in Jerusalem, fled to the mountains, and thus escaped the destruction which fell on the people, who had flocked thither in vast numbers, on the occasion of one of their great festivals. Jerusalem was then laid even with the dust, and her children within her; but at this time her temple will not be destroyed, but profaned by the presence of him who is the "abomination of desolation," sitting in the

temple of God, as God. When the virgin—the daughter of Zion—shall see this, then let her flee ; let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house (so as to encumber him in his flight) ; neither let him who is in the field return back to take his clothes : and wherefore such haste ? Because the dragon will cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he may cause her to be carried away of the flood. He seeks to destroy the hundred and forty and four thousand—the true seed of the woman who brought forth the man-child. Failing in this, he proceeds to make war with the remnant of her seed. Thus we see that the persecution of the woman is the persecution “of her seed,” and her seed are they who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

“ And when the dragon saw that he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place ; where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”

The dragon, indignant against God, on account of his humiliation in being cast down from heaven, seeks revenge on him in the persecution of his saints. To the woman (or to the seed of the woman) are given two wings of a great eagle. When God brought forth the children of Israel out of Egypt, this exact figure is used, “I brought you on eagle’s wings.” These wings were Moses and Aaron ; and these two wings now are those two olive trees which stand before the

God of the earth ; the two witnesses clothed in sackcloth ; the two prophets to whom it is given to torment them that dwell on the earth ; like as it was given to Moses and Aaron to torment, by plagues, the inhabitants of Egypt ; by them she is *safely conducted* into the wilderness, to the place prepared of God ; where she is nourished (or fed) by manna from heaven, and spiritually by the golden oil of the Holy Ghost, ministered by these two servants of God ; for these two olive branches, which, through the two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves, are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. The woman is to be fed there—in her seclusion and stronghold—for a thousand two hundred and threescore days ; *nourished* there for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. It is one and the same period, and is quite comprehensible to babes ; but the “wise and the prudent,” believing that some deeper mystery is involved than appears on the surface, have overshot the mark, and involved themselves in darkness.

“ And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.”

The dragon gave power to the beast, and the beast acts in all things by direction of the dragon. At his instigation, an army is despatched in pursuit of the little band, who are now hasting to the retreat provided for them by God. Waters, in the figurative language of Scripture, signify multitudes of people ; Antichrist's legions are the flood which the serpent casts out of his month after the woman ; and as when Moses lifted up his rod, and the sea over-

whelmed the enemies of Israel, so now by the same divine power are their enemies overthrown. "And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." As it was with Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, for whom the earth opened her mouth, and overwhelmed them and their households, so shall this judgment be. The earth shall open her mouth, and all their multitude shall be engulfed as in a moment, and disappear. Moses on the right hand, and Elijah on the left, shall then conduct the people in safety to their appointed retreat, where they shall remain in security and peace, until the vials of the wrath of God have been poured out, namely, the first five vials; the sixth having reference to their return to Mount Zion, to which they shall come with gladness, and singing, and with everlasting joy upon their heads; for the sixth angel shall pour out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof shall be dried up, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared. Thus will God protect and deliver his chosen, as the Lord delivered Israel of old, when Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings unto myself. Now therefore if ye will obey my voice in deed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people; for all the earth is mine." Thus then shall the chosen seed betake themselves to the place appointed by God, not as a scattered and dispersed multitude, but in one united and well organised body, under the conduct and leadership of Moses and Elias, and be nourished, as babes, with the sincere milk of the word, they that

may grow thereby; and grow they shall, rapidly, until they reach the stature of a perfect man in Christ, and be found, without fault, before the throne of God in that day when, with the Lamb, they stand upon Mount Zion. About this time (i. e., at the beginning of the forty and two months) an extraordinary phenomenon will be witnessed; one of those fearful sights and great signs which will characterize the closing period of this dispensation. It was by an angel that the first intimation was given of the coming Messiah, and also by an angel, accompanied by a multitude of the heavenly host, that the glad tidings of his advent were first proclaimed, so shall it be on the approach of his second and eternal advent. An angel shall appear, not to a few shepherds, but to peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Chapter 14th, verses 6 and 7.—“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

It is commonly supposed that by an angel flying in the midst of heaven, is meant the dissemination of the gospel among the nations, with the commission, “go ye into all nations and preach the gospel to every creature;” but an angel flying through the midst of heaven is a totally different thing from the feet of many messengers of peace traversing the earth; the one is not a figure of the other by natural, but by

forced construction. There is no reason why the statement should not be received in its simple literal rendering, because, what has been done, may be done again. The prophet, in his vision, beheld this angel in his passage through the heavens, and heard the words which proceeded from his lips. He is despatched on a special mission, which must necessitate him to cross seas and continents, delivering his message, once and for all, to the astonished inhabitants, with a loud voice, a voice as of thunder, so as to be distinctly heard by all the people of every city and country, in his passage through the firmament; in sound resembling the thunder peal which hushes into silence all nature before it. This angel is the last gospel preacher—like as the angel to the shepherds was the first—and it is the everlasting gospel which he has to preach, everlasting in its continuance to them who obey it; for it is the joy of heaven to fear God, and to give glory to him. This is God's last call to sinners, his last note of mercy, his final invitation. God has no pleasure that the wicked should perish, but that he should turn from his wickedness and live; but God will not always suffer rebellion, therefore, now, let men repent, before the door of mercy be for ever closed, for the hour of his judgment is come. He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge and reign over the world by that man whom he hath ordained, for the world will no longer be left to govern or to rule itself; its proper and legitimate ruler is about to occupy his throne, to judge the nations in righteousness, and to minister judgment to the people in uprightness, and every soul that will not obey his voice shall be cut off. It is in mercy that God will send this warning voice, a voice that shall be heard through every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, calling on all men to worship,

not the beast and his image, but him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. The phenomenon will assuredly be witnessed, be seen, and heard upon the earth, not of one angel only, for the thunder of his terrible voice, as he passes over the cities of the nations, will scarcely have been hushed, when again the thunder roll shall be heard, commanding the profound attention of the awestricken multitudes.

“ And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

This is the knell of the downfall of Rome, which is just about to take place by the confederacy of the ten kings ; all unexpected and suddenly, not unlike the manner in which the Jesuits were overthrown on a recent occasion. This voice also is past, the bright glory of him who spake has disappeared, when for the third time, the attention of all nations is demanded.

“ And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark upon his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever : and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.’

The first angel cried with a loud voice, and the third angel delivers his message—his terrible words of warning—with a clear and distinct utterance, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be without excuse, that none might receive the mark of Antichrist without being fully aware of the terrible penalty that would be incurred. As the loud peal of thunder, when it bursts over a city, is distinctly heard, so shall this last great and powerful voice reach the ears of young and old, of rich and poor together. These three most unusual, terrific, and unearthly proclamations, will excite for the moment the greatest wonder and alarm. The meaning of the last one may, perhaps, as yet, scarcely be comprehended, for the decree may not yet have gone forth, “that all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, shall receive a mark (or sign) on their right hand or on their forehead, and that none might buy or sell save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” The warning voice shall precede the decree; and wherever any fear of God remains, death will be preferred rather than obedience to the iniquitous dictator; and for the consolation of all such, are these words added, “here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the

Lamb, saying, great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." The kind of death appointed to such as disobey the decree of Antichrist is not mentioned, it is simply enacted that they should be killed; that the sentence of death being pronounced, should be immediately carried into execution. The mode of death appointed by this "fierce king" may probably be the same as given in the type, viz., to be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; for so was the decree of Nebuchadnezzar, concerning all who would not fall down and worship the golden image which he had set up; or it may be by decapitation. The reign of Antichrist will be characterized by great cruelty and unrelenting rigour. The warning proclamation of the angel will therefore be opportune, so that all may understand the terrible consequences of worshipping him or his image, or of receiving his mark on their forehead or in their hand. In those days there will be no neutral side which men can take; the alternative will be either death for disobedience to Antichrist, or death eternal for disobedience to God; many would like, if it were possible, to serve both masters, but the opposing claims are such that the one course or the other must be adopted; quick decision will be necessary, to choose between a violent death on the one hand, and eternal torment on the other. By far the greater number will prefer to risk the future vengeance of God (in the vain hope that he will not be so severe as he threatens), to the present certain loss of position, property, and life. Better, say they, to avoid a certain evil in the present, than an uncertain

one in the future—uncertain only because they know not that great being with whom they have to do, and whose word is inviolable, alike in his threatened denunciations, as in his promises. Nevertheless a few will hear the voice of God, and will obey; few, indeed, as compared with the many; yet in the aggregate a great multitude; these shall glorify the Lord, patiently enduring the death-penalty of Antichrist, with all its accompanying dishonour and shame, rather than receive his fearful imprint on their forehead or in their hand. They that know their God, will be mightily sustained and strengthened; they will endure, as seeing him who is invisible. “Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,” here is the secret strength by which the patience of the saints shall be preserved, and here the strong foundation on which they shall securely rest. Believing in the promise, they shall lay hold upon eternal life, and that hope will sustain them.

The first French Revolution, at the close of the last century, resembles in many points the actual state into which Christendom shall be thrown in the early part of those fearful times. The events which then occurred in France, and especially in the capital, will probably be repeated in many of the principle cities in Europe. It will be a time of universal infidelity and blasphemy; whatever wears the garb of sanctity, will be execrated and abolished; but anarchy will, as in the days of the French Republic, give place to more settled rule, when the reins of universal government are assumed by Antichrist; which indeed will be necessary, in order to the entire subjugation of all classes to his sovereign authority; that he may receive those divine honours to which he shall lay claim; opposed and resisted by none, but a comparative

handful of the poor and the despised among men. With them the dragon is at war. Foiled, in his attempts to overwhelm the woman, who fled into the wilderness, he goes to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. With them no man may buy or sell, or interchange commodities, and no household will be allowed to harbour them, on penalty of death. They shall have trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments; all the past forms of suffering and persecution, will be renewed against these outlaws, who shall be termed the dregs of society, and the offscourings of the earth. They shall be stoned, be tempted, be slain with the sword, shall wander about in sheepskins, and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented; wandering in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth. The time indeed shall be short, but the persecution shall be hot, while it lasts, for it will be the last opportunity that ever the Devil shall have of wreaking his vengeance on the children of God; and he will make the most of the "short time" which he knows is now allotted to him. The people of God shall fall "by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, for days;" not many days certainly, not more than 1260, or the brief three and a half years, during which it is permitted to Antichrist to reign; for power shall be given unto him to continue forty and two months, during which he shall make war with the saints, and overcome them, causing all that will not worship his image, to be slain. He shall look abroad upon a world prostrate at his feet, and shall say, "by the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent, and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures,

and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man. And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people ; and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth : and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.” Yet there shall be honourable exceptions, who shall open the mouth, and shall not be silent ; like as Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego, who feared not the face of the proud monarch, and preferred the worst death which he could inflict, rather than dishonour their God. The Scriptures testify, that this last, if the shortest, will be the most bitter, most malignant, and most unrelenting of all the persecutions ; for he shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, times, and the dividing of a time. He shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people ; but in the midst of all this fiery persecution, they shall instruct many ; many will be saved in the midst of the fires, for the cause of God will, as of old, prosper most in the midst of persecution, and the blood of the saints will be the seed of the church. It is to this time more especially that our Lord refers, when he says, “ they shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake, and then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many, and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold, but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” At this time the two chosen prophets of God shall bear their testimony, clothed in sackcloth, and it shall not be possible to lay human hands upon them, nor to harm them with any destructive weapon,

until the end of their testimony; which is also the end of Antichrist's reign, at which time he shall prevail against them, and overcome them, and kill them; but "when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." At the moment when he has attained to the undisputed sway of all the earth, by the destruction of the two prophets, who had been invulnerable until the close of their testimony; at that moment when his triumph seems complete, shall judgment come upon him, and upon the guilty nations who have acknowledged him, by receiving his mark on their forehead or in their hand. The vials of the wrath of God are now to be poured out, and God will punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.

"The vials of the wrath of God."

The sky is suddenly overcast, the thunders roll, the lightnings lighten the world, and a time of trouble begins, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger—it is the time of the great tribulation—unprecedented in the history of the world, being the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the full measure of his indignation. It is the commencement of the third woe, and the introduction to the seventh trumpet, with all its terrible consequences. There will be thirty days of judgments, so horrible, that unless the period was brief, it would be impossible for any of the human race to survive, "but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Now, the hour of mercy is past, for ever, to all who have suffered the imprint of Antichrist on their forehead or in their right hand; "they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture,

into the cup of his indignation, and they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the lamb ; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest, day nor night, who have worshipped the beast and his image, and whosoever hath received the mark of his name.”

“ And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.”

The ministers of God’s vengeance on this occasion are seven angels, and these seven angels are the spirits of just men made perfect, as appears from their being clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles—a dress corresponding in form to their glorified head. Any doubt on this point is set at rest by the fact afterwards narrated, that it was one of those seven, who, when John was about to worship him, said, “ see thou do it not, for I am of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book, worship God.” There must have been a surpassing splendour and glory in the appearance of those seven angels coming forth as the ministers of Jehovah’s vengeance ; for he writes of it as a sign great and marvellous, as he beheld them coming out of the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven, which was then opened and disclosed to view. A still higher dignitary, one of the four living creatures, who also is one of the redeemed, gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

“ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power ; and no

man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven, is the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man—and its being filled with smoke denotes anger, indignation, and wrath. "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured, coals were kindled by it." The smoke came from God ; from the glory of God, and from his power. It is the hour of Jehovah's indignation, and of his great fury ; no man may enter into his temple until the vials of his indignation shall have been poured out ; which greatly exceed all the preceding displays of his vengeance.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and upon them who worshipped his image.

3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5. And I heard the angel of the waters say, thou art righteous, O Lord, who art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus:

6. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7. And I heard another out of the altar say, even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

11. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water of the east thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the earth might be prepared.

13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, who go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16. And he gathered them together unto a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, it is done.

18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent ; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

“ And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying, to the seven angels, go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.”

This great voice was the voice of the Almighty, which is “ powerful and full of majesty.” When he speaks, it is done ; for who may resist his will ? Still it is a command, given, not from choice, but from stern necessity, for God afflicteth not willingly, nor grieveth the children of men. It is as if he had said, I have no pleasure in the sufferings of men, I have no pleasure in giving you this order to inflict suffering, but it is unavoidable ; my holiness must be vindicated in inflicting judgments, proportioned to the enormity of men’s transgressions, therefore, go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

“ The first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth ; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and them who worshipped his image.”

The first went—there is an order of procedure, for God is the God of order—he poured out his vial upon the earth—there was no necessary connection between the outpouring of the vial, and the judgment which followed, any more than the judgments which followed on Egypt when the rod of Moses was lifted up ; both

were instituted signs appointed by God on which certain judgments were to follow. On this sign being given, there fell upon the worshippers of Antichrist, i. e., upon all the inhabitants of the world, "for all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world," a noisome and grievous sore. This sore did not spread like an epidemic from one to another, but it fell like a universal hail storm, at one and the sametime, seizing on all classes, high and low, rich and poor, young and old together; not a sore of gradual growth, but the instantaneous plague spot, struck by an invisible, but all-powerful arm; it shall be noisome and grievous, most offensive, and most irritating and painful. The judgment on the Egyptians was the type of this judgment. The Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, saying, "take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven, in the sight of Pharaoh, and it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took the ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses sprinkled it toward heaven, and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. So now a disease of the most painful and loathsome description will be universal among all families, without exemptions, and where one cannot attend to another upon account of his own intolerable burden. How greatly more severe is the judgment in the pouring out of the first vial, as compared with that on the sounding of the first trumpet. In it there was mercy mingled with judg-

ment—a third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. It was an indirect infliction, but now the hand of God falls heavily upon men themselves. In the past history of the world, the only resemblance to this judgment, besides the boil which fell upon the Egyptians, is that of the Philistines who daringly put their sacrilegious hands upon the Ark of God, and brought it into the temple of their god Dagon. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods. It was taken to Gath, and immediately the hand of the Lord was against that city with a very great destruction, and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts; and in Ekron there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city. The hand of God was very heavy there, and the men that died not were smitten with the emerods; and the cry of the city went up to heaven; for the Lord awoke as one out of sleep; and as a giant refreshed with wine, he smote his enemies in the hinder parts, and put them to a perpetual shame. The noisome, disgraceful, and grievous inflictions on the idolatrous Philistines may resemble these. In those dreadful days, when men are universally afflicted with a noisome and grievous sore, the application of cold water may greatly help to allay the heat, and diminish the pain, but alas, this alleviation is soon denied also, for the water is turned into blood, while the pains and the sores are not removed. The second vial is poured out, and the third and the fourth quickly follow each other; differing most materially from the judgments under the trumpets, for then a new judgment did not descend until the first was removed, but in this time of great tribulation, and trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy, all the inflictions not only follow each other with

great rapidity, but co-exist together, suffering upon suffering accumulating, until the endurance is such, that unless the days were shortened, no flesh could be saved ; but for the elect's sake, the days shall be shortened, and will not exceed a single month, viz., from the 1260th to the 1290th day. A month seems but a short period, yet a month of horrible suffering, and of excruciating agony, is a long time. If in the days of the sounding of the trumpets, men sought for death, and could not find it, and desired to die, but death did flee from them ; what must it be in these days of vengeance, when the seven last plagues shall come, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

“ And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man ; and every living soul died in the sea.”

Here again the increased severity, as compared with the judgment which came under the second trumpet, is to be observed, for then only a third part of the sea became blood, and only a third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died ; and only a third part of ships were destroyed, but now the whole ocean, the Atlantic, the Pacific, and all the inland seas become one vast mass of stagnant putrid blood ; all the fish in the sea die, all the shipping is destroyed, and all their crews and passengers are suffocated by the pestilential vapours which arise from the strangely altered element. It will be a scene of distress and horror, for whether one look to the sea, or unto the land, behold, “ darkness and sorrow ; and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.” Scarcely has this additional calamity been fully realized, when another terrible judgment follows.

“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood.”

In the judgment under the third trumpet, a third part of the rivers and fountains of waters became wormwood, and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter; but now not a third, nor two-thirds, but every river and stream upon the face of the whole earth becomes blood; this additional calamity must be a great aggravation of the distress and suffering; no cup of cold water can be got, at any price, to quench the parched lips, or to allay the burning fever which must be raging in every breast. Alas! who can live when God doeth thus. “When his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” This judgment shall be literally accomplished, for it was so in the day when God brought forth his people from the iron furnace. “The Lord spake to Moses saying, say unto Aaron, take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood, and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so as the Lord commanded, and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants, and all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood, and the fish that was in the river died, and the rivers stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river, and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.” What God has done in judgment on one nation in times past, God will do again, not on one nation, but on all the nations of the earth, in the day when he shall

remember their iniquity, and visit their sin. In that day he will not spare, nor have pity, nor have mercy, but will destroy them. The Lord God Almighty will pull them out as sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them as for a day of slaughter. "As a dream when one awaketh, so, O God, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image."

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus : for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy."

The angel of the waters is the angel who was commissioned to pour out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, that they might become blood ; having fulfilled his divine mission, and beheld all the rivers, and all the fountains of waters turned into blood, he lifts up his voice in adoration to him whose righteousness is thus gloriously manifested, in rendering to the guilty nations according to their deeds, for they thirsted after the blood of saints and prophets, and without compunction, shed their blood, who would not receive the mark of the beast, nor worship his image ; and for a recompence, they receive blood to drink ; nothing but blood in their rivers, in their reservoirs, in their cisterns, in their pipes, and in all their vessels. The element is changed, and nothing but blood is to be obtained, which cannot quench thirst, nor be used for culinary purposes. These judgments are not metaphorical, but literal, as truly as the judgments on the Egyptians were literal. As the blood of the saints and prophets which was shed was literally blood, so shall be the blood which the

nations shall be made to drink ; and what an aggravation of the distress and suffering, it must be, to the multitudes, already oppressed with grievous and noisome sores, not to have a drop of water to quench their parched lips ; no liquid that may be tasted or drunk, but blood ; blood in the rivers, in the springs, in the ponds and pools, and in all vessels ; when any sum in gold shall be unable to purchase a single goblet of water.

“ And I heard another angel out of the altar say, even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.”

In those days men will blaspheme the name of God on account of their sufferings, but in heaven, the angels of God will respond to each other in adoration and praise of him, who thus vindicates his righteousness in the judgments which he sends. This voice proceeded from the altar, and therefore came from one of the priesthood ; one of the redeemed from among men. “ He hath made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth.” This glorified saint, beholding this terrible visitation on men, gives glory and praise to God ; echoing the adoring praise which had already proceeded from the lips of the angel of the waters—“ even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.”

“ And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun ; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over these plagues : and they repented not to give him glory.”

The corresponding judgment, under the fourth trumpet, was mild as compared with the present, for it consisted simply in the partial withdrawment of the light. "It shone not for a third part," a deprivation which, although attended with great inconvenience to men, was more a "sign," a "great sign," that wrath was portending, than an actual judgment; but now the thunderbolts of his vengeance fearfully reverberate over the devoted heads of wicked men, and the hour has come for the most fearful judgment that has yet descended. From the opening of the second seal, when the day of judgment began, the inflictions have gradually increased in severity, and now, with the exception of darkness, which is about to overspread the kingdom where the seat of the beast is, the judgments have reached their climax, "for the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" and the words are fulfilled which are written in the 21st Psalm, "thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out them that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them." No doubt these words have a still more complete fulfilment on the very day of the appearing of the Son of God; still they now begin to be fulfilled, for men are scorched with great heat, just as if put into a fiery oven. The earth is brought into nearer proximity to the sun by a number of degrees, and the consequence is greatly increased heat, so that men are *scorched*, and pained exceedingly; and this be it remembered while they are still under the judgments of the preceding plagues; producing altogether most poignant affliction; yet, so far is it from producing repentance, that they curse the rod, and him that sends it; a

melancholy proof that in hell there will be no repentance, but an ever growing hatred to the God who made them. This great and scorching heat, added to the noisome and grievous sores, and to the raging thirst, which blood cannot quench, altogether must produce a scene of fearful suffering over every city and nation upon the the earth. "Knowest thou not yet, said the servants of Pharaoh to their master, that Egypt is destroyed." By these accumulated judgments, the earth must be destroyed; all green grass and every herb of the field must be burned up, and the elements themselves melt with fervent heat. The predicted signs will have all been fulfilled; wonders in the heaven above, signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; and nothing seems wanting to complete the misery but the total absence of light, and this, in so far as one of the kingdoms is concerned, is added. This kingdom is pre-eminent in crime, and therefore marked out for pre-eminence in punishment.

"The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains, and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

This vial is confined to a single kingdom, and first of all to the capital of that kingdom, and thence spreading over the kingdom more quickly than the darkness over the horizon at the setting of the sun. The seat of the beast will be Rome, because Anti-christ is in Scripture termed, "the King of Babylon;" and the Apostle Peter instructs us that the modern

Babylon is Rome. This city is presently the seat of the whore, the mother of harlots; but there will co-exist in the one city a temporal and a spiritual head, the former sustaining the latter, as the beast is said to "carry her" until the proper time for casting her off. At the time when this vial is poured out, it is called the seat of the beast, and not of the beast and the whore, because before these plagues commenced, the judgments written concerning her in the 17th and 18th chapter of Revelation, have all been fulfilled, and she, an ecclesiastical polity, is defunct, and has no existence; for during the 1260 days, none were permitted any form of religion or worship, nor to do sacrifice to any God, except to the one mighty monarch who had exalted himself above all that is called God, and required, under penalty of death, that every knee should bow to him, and every forehead or hand receive an imprint, which signified an acknowledgment of him as God. This last visitation is confined to the seat of the beast, to the country in which he more immediately governs, and the capital city in which he dwells. The darkness, to be a real punishment, must be such as for three days covered all the land of Egypt, for Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any one from his place for three days. It is the total absence of light; the vapours so intense, that even artificial light is powerless, and instantly goes out. There will be no solar, no lunar, nor artificial light, the canopy above black, and not a star peering through. Such will be the darkness of Antichrist's kingdom, while enduring their pains and their sores, proceeding from the outpouring of the first vial; and gnawing their tongues for pain, occasioned by the scorching heat, under the fourth vial.

Thus the distinguishing difference between the last series of judgments, and all which have preceded, not only lies in their greatly increased range and intensity, but also in their being superadded, the one upon the other, and co-existing in all their fierce intensity at one and the sametime. The judgments on Egypt were successive, and a new judgment was not sent until the previous one had been removed. The judgments under the seals were successive, and so also were those under the trumpets ; but not so with the vials ; though poured out in succession, they accumulate on each other, giving increased suffering and agony to men. Now a solemn and mysterious darkness veils the sky, a darkness like to that of Egypt, a mist so dense that artificial light will not burn ; his kingdom was full of darkness, and they “gnawed their tongues for pain.” This is the great tribulation ; such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be ; and there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth *distress of nations with perplexity* ; the sea and the waves roaring, men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. The effect produced by these judgments will not bring men to God, but will harden their hearts still more against him. They blaspheme the name of God who hath power over these plagues, and they repent not to give him glory. They blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repent not of their deeds. Their enmity to God is intensified in proportion to the increase of their torture. “He casts upon them the fierceness of his wrath, anger, indignation, and trouble,” and they endure, with ever-increasing hatred of him who punishes them in

righteousness, and shall punish them with everlasting destruction from his presence, and from the glory of his power; their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched.

The fire of hell will never purify the soul, "but he that is filthy shall be filthy still;" no change for the better shall ever pass upon the minds of those who have rejected the only means whereby that change could have been affected. Men will never more be capable of goodness, "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." The opening of the seventh seal was followed by the sounding, in succession, of seven trumpets, six of whom have now been sounded; the seventh and last has yet to sound, for "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." The sounding of the seventh angel is "the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God," when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, which shall reverberate through the whole earth. The great trumpet therefore shall not be blown until all the seven vials have been poured out; and with those seven vials begin the last of the three woes, concerning which, it was said, "woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the three angels who are yet to sound." The first woe, with the five months torment of locusts (evil angels); the second woe, with the destruction of a third part of the human race, succeeded by the judgments inflicted during the ministry of Moses and Elias [*for these two Prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth*]. The third woe precedes the sounding of the last trumpet, and is as it were preliminary to it, as well as consequent upon it.

Thus there is an awful solemnity preparatory to the destruction of a doomed world ; like as it was to the doomed city Jericho, of which we read, that the Israelites were commanded to march once round the city, for six successive days, blowing with their trumpets ; and in the seventh day, they were to march seven times around it, and on the termination of the seventh circuit, to give a great shout, and blow with the trumpets, and at that instant the catastrophe to the city would come ; the walls would, of their own accord, fall flat, and all the inhabitants be given up to destruction ; so shall it be with the world, when the Lord himself shall descend, with the shout of the Archangel, and with the trump of God. Five of the vials have now been poured out, the first, bringing grievous and noisome sores ; the second, turning the sea into stagnant blood ; the third, converting every liquid into blood ; the fourth, broiling the inhabitants of the world with scorching heat ; and the fifth, superadding darkness that may be felt. All these judgments have come in rapid succession, and simultaneously afflicting earth's guilty inhabitants ; but the days must be shortened, for otherwise no flesh could survive, but for "the elect's sake, who are still on the earth, the days are shortened." The daylight returns, the scorching rays of the sun are withdrawn, the elements, which were melting with fervent heat, again are restored to their natural state ; blood is reconverted into its former element, and the noisome and grievous sores disappear with the same mysterious suddenness with which they came. 30 days have expired, making 1290 days, and leaving 45 days for the great events which have to be realized, when the sixth angel pours out his vial. During this interval of about six weeks, the pains and the sores will be all healed, and the world will have a breathing time

once more. They will say, as of old, "it was a chance that happened to us," some unaccountable phenomena which is past, and will not return; but alas, the "triumphing of the wicked is short," for the day is at hand when the final stroke will come, when "the Lord shall make the earth empty, and make it waste, and turn it upside down, and scatter abroad the inhabitants thereof." Then will come the closing scene of the last act of this great drama, and then the morning will come, and so will the night. "He calleth to me out of Seir, watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? The watchman answers, the morning cometh, and so doth the night; if ye will enquire, enquire ye, return, come." The curtain shall then drop, and time shall be no longer; anarchy and rebellion, and all popular government shall be put down with the high hand of Almighty power, and the earth from henceforth shall be, *de facto*, the Lord's; he who was born to be a king (as he said, "for this cause was I born, and to this end came I into the world") shall be installed in his government; and "shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

It will be remembered, that to the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place; a place prepared for her by God; that she should be fed there, for a time, times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. That period of three years and a half, during which

Antichrist reigned uncontrolled monarch of the earth, is now past, and also the thirty days of great tribulation. The time therefore has arrived for the woman to come forth from her hiding place, and to return; the days of her mourning and widowhood are ended, her mourning habiliments are to be for ever discarded. Now will she indeed be clothed with the sun, and have the moon beneath her feet, and have upon her head a crown of twelve stars, for the sun of suns will be a halo of glory around her continually, making her the perfection of beauty and an eternal excellency, the joy of the whole earth. Jerusalem's new found children, the 144,000 out of all the tribes of the children of Israel, these have been chosen to be a first fruits unto God and the Lamb, "the remnant that return, even the remnant of Jacob unto the mighty God." These are the kings of the east, whose way is now to be prepared, by the literal drying up of the water of the great river Euphrates, like as the waters of Jordan were dried to make a passage for Israel of old. The place assigned for their retreat as a place of refuge, is not as yet known; but it will be somewhere in Western Asia, not far distant from the Land of Promise, probably near to the banks of the Euphrates, which river forms the north-east border of the country assigned as the limits of Israel's territory. To them the word has gone forth, "behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. And now their mourning is turned into dancing, they put off their sackcloth, and gird themselves with gladness, to the end that they may sing praises to him who is their glory, and not be silent any more for ever." These are the kings of the east; henceforth to be a nation of kings (for every nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish); whose passage dryshod through the river is now prepared. "The Lord

will beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come who were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the Holy Mount at Jerusalem." The Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria, like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt. And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." "Go through, go through the gates, prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold, thy salvation cometh. Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." Thus gloriously shall the remnant of Israel proceed towards the border of his sanctuary, even to the mountain which his right hand hath purchased, to the sanctuary which he hath built like high palaces, and like the earth which he hath established for ever. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places; they shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them, for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains, for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. These are the kings of the east, for whom a passage through the river is miraculously prepared, that they may "return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." While the hundred and forty and four thousand, the sealed remnant of all the tribes of Israel, are thus preparing to proceed in triumph to Jerusalem, to welcome their incarnate God, and to crown him "Lord of all," it will be necessary to return to the position of affairs among the nations. The thirty days "great tribulation" are past, and all the terrible effects of those days have suddenly, and as if by magic, disappeared, for otherwise it were impossible to bring their countless thousands, all marshalled and prepared, and brought from all their various localities, to the land afar off, to the land of Palestine, and to the great plain of Esdraelon, where is to be fought the Battle of Armageddon. All nature revives, and no more portentous signs appear. With wonderful celerity, therefore, do all classes resume their varied occupations and amusements, and "as it was in the days of Noah, men were eating and drinking, and buying and selling, and planting and building, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away. So shall it be on the day when the Son of Man cometh." The darkening clouds are past, the sky is clear, the sun has returned to his genial heat, the sea is again the watery element, and all nature has suddenly resumed its wonted aspect. Alas, it is but a lull in the storm, which soon will break forth with tenfold fury; for the Lord Almighty himself is about to come forth from his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover

her slain ; but at present, and for the moment, all nature seems restored to tranquility, and promises to be, as it had been, from the creation of the world. Men begin again to buy and to sell, to plant and to build, to marry, and to give in marriage, and are thus found engaged on the *very day* when the Son of Man shall come. At present, they will look back on the past with shuddering thoughts ; reasons of all sorts will be assigned for the changing of the element of water into blood, for the scorching heat of the sun, and for the noisome and grievous sore, which was so universal ; reasons of a nature to calm the apprehensions of men, and allay their fears ; but under all, and through all these reasonings, there will pervade society a conviction that the Ruler of the Universe has had a hand in these terrible inflictions. Yes, but only to increase the hatred of their hearts to him ; and now a universal feeling will be diffused as to the possibility of shaking off entirely, and for ever, the yoke of the Almighty. “The heathen rage, and the people imagine a *vain* thing.” The kings of the earth (the ten kings with Antichrist at their head) shall set themselves, and the rulers shall take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, “let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” This is precisely what they shall do. Regarding the Almighty as an hard master, reaping where he hath not sown, and gathering where he hath not strawed, they shall combine in counsel to overthrow his authority, and to set the world free from the thralldom of subjection to him for ever. This is the “*vain thing*” which mankind, now thoroughly demented, and doomed to destruction, shall attempt. As in the generation after the flood, they commenced to build a tower, whose top should reach to heaven, and thus set the Almighty at defiance, should he

think proper to send another flood upon the earth ; so now a great scheme shall be contemplated, whereby the control of the Almighty over the affairs and persons of men shall be for ever removed. This suggestion, originating with the father of evil, is communicated to his vicegerent, who is Antichrist, and to his prime minister, the false prophet, and by them, to the nations of the earth.

“ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, who go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

In the vision, the prophet, looking on the dragon, the beast (Antichrist), and the false prophet, saw, issuing from their mouths, creatures having the appearance of frogs, which he declares to have been unclean spirits. Thus they were animated and empowered to work miracles, to speak by demoniac power, and to excite, to animate, and to stir up the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to proceed to Palestine, and there have the question decided as to who should henceforth reign. The world, long before, sent a message after the nobleman who went into the far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return, that they would not have this man to reign over them; they had long manifested their hostility to him in the persons of his servants ; now they would not be disinclined to throw down the gauntlet, and try the conflict with himself in person. An immense assemblage is brought together, to make one combined

and mighty effort to be themselves "gods," to be independent of God, to be able to say, "our lips are our own, who is Lord over us," and so to appropriate to themselves the earth for an inheritance. As in time past, when they saw the Son, they said, "this is the heir, come and let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours;" so they took him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him, but he, having been raised from the dead, and having ascended to heaven, hath for many years allowed the successors of those wicked husbandmen to retain possession, but now the fulness of the time has come when it must be forcibly taken out of their hands, and wrested from them. And the devil knowing this, and knowing also, that the time has arrived, is resolved not to give it up without a determined struggle to maintain it. He would not leave heaven without a determined struggle to maintain his position there, and in conjunction with his fallen hosts, he contended, in actual conflict, with Michael and his angels, but prevailed not, but was cast down to the earth. Now he knows that the time has arrived when he is to be lodged in prison, enchained in the bottomless pit for many days, and deprived from any longer "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it." It is he who is the great instigator of this determined, but abortive attempt, on the part of mankind, to free themselves from subjection to Jehovah and his Anointed, to "break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." An insane idea suddenly takes possession of all classes that, somehow, by one vast combination, the powers of the earth shall become a match for the powers of heaven, and the conviction is greatly strengthened by miracles being wrought, in confirmation, by the dragon, by the beast, and by the false prophet. They make men believe that they go to assured victory.

They would not go with the prospect of certain destruction ; they must be drawn together by delusive hopes, from positive assurances, confirmed by miracles of so demonstrative a nature, that " if it were possible, the very elect should be deceived by them." The guilty nations are therefore drawn *en masse* to the place appointed for their doom, joined in one great confederation for liberty and independence ; liberty to live henceforth, without any controlling power, in heaven or on earth. " He that sits in the heaven shall laugh, Jehovah shall have them in derision." Meanwhile they are suffered to proceed with their god-defying scheme, being urged thereto by the spirits of devils working miracles, through the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. They enrol themselves by thousands, and tens of thousands, in the armies of Antichrist and his kings, and are despatched in rapid succession to the scene of contest, the great plain of Esdraelon in Palestine. It is called Armageddon, the ancient Megiddo, where Barak, with ten thousand unarmed men, entirely routed, and almost wholly slew, the mighty host of the Canaanites, who covered the face of the whole country. It is at this precise period, when God is thus congregating his enemies for the final stroke of vengeance, that he prepares a passage for the return of his remnant of Israel, that " ye may be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel." " Behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles. Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let

them come up. Assemble yourselves, and come all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about; thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear all ye of far countries; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand, for God is with us.” “The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together; the Lord of Hosts mustereth the host of the battle.” “Woe to the multitude of many people who make a noise like the noise of the seas, and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters. The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters; but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. And behold, at evening-tide, trouble; and before the morning he is not.” The multitude of the strangers (which shall in that day occupy Palestine and Jerusalem) shall be like small dust, and “the multitude of the terrible (fierce and cruel) ones shall be as chaff that passeth away; yea their destruction shall be at an instant, suddenly. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire; and the multitude of all the nations that fight against Mount Zion shall be as a dream of a night vision, for behold the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy; his lips are full of

indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire. And the indignation of the Lord shall be upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies; he will utterly destroy them, he will deliver them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground. This, then, is the purpose of God, to congregate the nations in one vast assemblage, under Antichrist, attended by his false prophet, with the ten kings and their armies; and in the sight of all, to descend in glorious majesty, and take summary vengeance upon them.

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

These remarkable words come between the pouring out of the sixth, and the pouring out of the seventh vial; they have no apparent connection with the context, but come in as a sudden interpolation, evidently and distinctly conveying the blessed intelligence, that it shall be at this particular juncture when the cry shall go forth, “behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him.” This shall be an event of unutterable importance to the whole election of God; from righteous Abel, the first martyr, to the last of the saints who have died in the Lord; and also to the few survivors who may have escaped the fiery persecution of Antichrist, and are alive at the coming of the Lord. Of these, the number shall be extremely few, for when the Son of Man cometh, he shall scarce

find faith upon the earth. The day and the hour is fixed for the resurrection of the righteous dead, and the translation of the righteous who are alive. It will immediately follow the pouring out of the seventh vial, for all things shall then be ready for his actual, and sudden, and immediate appearing. And his coming for his bride shall be as the coming of the thief at midnight, sudden, and without any premonitory warning. At that hour two men shall be sleeping in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other left; two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom; five of them were wise, and five were foolish; they that were foolish, took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept; and at midnight there was a cry made, behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps; and the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out; but the wise answered and said, not so, lest there be not enough for us, and for you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and *the door was shut*. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things which come to pass upon the world, and to stand before the Son of Man."

At this time the dragon will put forth all his energies to deceive the few remaining saints, when he finds that persecution has not availed to shake their firmness and confidence in God : the spirits of devils, work miracles, not only for the purpose of gathering the nations to the conflict, but also to deceive the saints of God ; for at that very time there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders. " Wherefore, if they shall say, behold, he is in the desert, go not forth ; behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not ; " and why ? because at his coming, every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him ; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him ; for as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be ; but first must his saints be gathered unto him, as it is written " gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice," i. e., those that through my sacrifice have embraced my covenant. He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet ; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. By these angels they shall be conducted to their risen Lord ; although even of themselves would they find him, for, like as " where the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered together," so will the saints wing their flight to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. Meantime, as already observed, the armies of Antichrist, and the ten kings, are being gathered. Once more, and for the last time, the country is made desolate, " the highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth ; the land mourneth and languisheth, Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down ; Sharon is like a wilderness, and Bashan and Carmel

shake off their fruits." The words that follow the Scripture now quoted, show that the time to favour Zion is at length come; and also the time to strike the last terrible blow, which will destroy all the wicked of the earth. "Now will I rise, saith the Lord, now will I be exalted, now will I lift up myself; ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble, your breath as fire shall devour you; and the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire." "For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire." This is the Battle of Armageddon to which the nations of the earth are now being gathered: they shall cover the country with their multitudes. These are the floods that lift up (as recorded in the 93rd Psalm), the floods that lift up their voice, the floods that lift up their waves; but the Lord that is on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea, signifying the tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together; as it is written, "the heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted." And again, "I saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him (the Son of God) that sat on the horse, and against his army." It is evident, from the vast assemblage, and dense masses of armed men brought together, that a far greater object is in view than the conquest of the yet insignificant and scarcely recovered nation of Israel. The devil and his angels have been cast down only recently from heaven, now they will make a mighty effort to preserve the earth for their territory; and to avert a still further descent from earth to hell, they combine with, and lead on, the powers of earth to this conflict; to fight against

Jehovah, and against his anointed, to set the briers and the thorns against him in battle ; but he will go through them, and will destroy them together. What madness ! what folly ! to expect to measure swords successfully with omnipotence, to fight against God. The potsherds of the earth may fight with the potsherds of the earth, but woe to him that contendeth with his maker ; yet this insane imagination shall take possession of men's minds, through the influence of the miraculous, but diabolical agency brought to bear upon them. "The spirits of Devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." It is possible, that in the pride and arrogancy of men's hearts, much dependence may be placed on the great improvements in the destructive agencies which science has brought to bear on modern warfare ; but in vain will be all the improved appliances of war, when directed against him who weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ; who taketh up the isles as a very little thing ; and in whose sight all the nations of the earth are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. For all nations before him are as nothing, they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. The feeble efforts of an infant in the hand of a full grown man, is but a feeble comparison to the utter imbecility, and the nothingness of the assembled multitudes, when brought into conflict with him who is the former and maker of all things, and who by the word of his power upholds and preserves the whole universe. Yet such will be the infatuation, that the nations will be led on in their pride, to imagine themselves, when combined together, a match for the God of heaven.

“Let us break his bands asunder say they, and cast away his cords from us ; let us by one determined and combined act of resistance, defy him, and assert for ever our independence.” It is possible, that, by a universal conscription, each of the ten kings may be able to muster a million of men, which, with double that number by Antichrist himself, might raise the number to twelve millions, which could be congregated on the immense plain of Esdraelon : Antichrist being at the head of them, attended by his minister, the false prophet, “for he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain :” but the moment is near when he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. The determination of the Lord is to gather the nations, that he may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of his jealousy. He will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, he will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen ; but first he will perform his whole work on Mount Zion, that he may destroy the sinners thereof out of it ; “and it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein, and I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them ; I will say it is my people, and they shall say the Lord is my God. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem ; thou shalt weep no more, he will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry ; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.” Thus shall it be with the third part. “Thou, O God, hast proved us, thou hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net ; thou laidst affliction upon our

loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads ; we went through fire and through water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." God will thus make use of Antichrist, before his final overthrow, for purging the house of Israel ; for the wicked are his hand, his instruments by which he accomplishes his holy ends. Thus he will use this enemy to purge his people. "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin, and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning ; afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgement, and her converts with righteousness, and the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." To accomplish this work of purification, "all nations will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem ; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." From that time, henceforward, and for ever, the nation of Israel shall be, without any exceptions, a holy nation unto the Lord. "Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and no strangers shall pass through her any more. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good, and they shall all serve me, from the least unto the greatest, they, and their seed, and

their seed's seed, for ever." This will therefore form the finishing stroke of Antichrist ; he has been Jehovah's battle axe and his weapons of war, he has been the rod of his anger, and the staff of his indignation ; he had employed him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of his wrath had he given him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets ; but now the hour of his own visitation is at hand ; when he that spoiled, shall himself be spoiled, and his spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar, for thus saith the Lord, " behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege, both against Judah and against Jerusalem ; and in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people. All that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, *although all the people of the earth* be gathered together against it.

Chapter 14th, verse 14.—" And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, thrust in thy sickle, and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth ; and the earth was reaped."

Thus " ye shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven," with power and great glory.

“He has a golden crown on his head;” that same crown which was given him at the beginning of this great conflict; at the opening of the first seal, when “a crown was given to him,” and he went forth conquering and to conquer. Now he has it on his head, and the sickle in his hand, for the time of harvest is come, when he shall say to the reapers, gather ye first the tares, and bind them in bundles, to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn. The time, the set time to favour Zion, is also the time to execute vengeance on the nations that know not God; the times of the Gentiles will then be fulfilled; the times of mercy and grace ended, and the time of their visitation in judgment arrived. “Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down, for the press is full; the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.” These are the multitudes, viz., the congregated hosts of Antichrist, brought together to receive the due reward of their deeds; “fury to his adversaries, and recompense to his enemies.” The time has arrived for the seventh angel to pour out his vial into the air, and the judgments that follow will greatly surpass in magnitude and in fearfulness all that have preceded; nor will any breathing time be allowed thereafter, for the great trumpet shall then be blown, and the dead in Christ shall be raised up from their graves, and the living (in Christ) shall be changed; and this resurrection and translation shall be the work of an instant. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (who are alive, and have believed in Christ) shall be changed. On the pouring out of the vial, the fearful earthquake, and accompanying hail-storm

will follow. Next, will be the sounding of the trumpet, with the immediate translation of the saints, who go to meet the Lord in the air, and form into one mighty phalanx and glittering procession ; following him, as it were, upon white horses, while he descends in awful majesty to judgment.

“ And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air ; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, it is done.”

When Jesus expired on the cross, his last words were, it is finished. The things concerning him at his first coming had then an end ; and now these solemn words, “ it is done,” denote that the crisis has arrived, that the day of mercy is past, and the hour of judgment is come ; and to give the more importance to these awful words, they are not transmitted by any messenger, but are heard proceeding from the mouth of Jehovah himself, “ a great voice out of the temple, from the throne.”

And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings ; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.”

These voices, and thunders, and lightnings, always proceeded out from the throne ; they preceded the sounding of the first trumpet, which properly formed the beginning of the judgments ; for all that went before are described as being but the beginnings of sorrows ; yet among these beginnings of sorrows was that fearful earthquake, under the sixth seal, which, accompanied as it was by fearful sights in heaven,

created the greatest consternation among men ; for every mountain and island were moved out of their place. A universal panic was produced, and the impression every where prevailed that the day of judgment had then arrived. Happily, for the moment, their fears were not realized ; but now a greater earthquake is felt—an earthquake of such magnitude that every human habitation shall be destroyed. “ Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.” “ Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest ; as with the servant, so with his master ; as with the maid, so with her mistress ; as with the buyer, so with the seller ; as with the lender, so with the borrower ; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him ;” all classes, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the young, and the old, shall be alike sufferers, for the earth shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled, for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth shall be utterly broken down, shall be clean dissolved, shall be moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage ; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again. “ The day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low ; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures ; and the loftiness of man shall be bowed

down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell : and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."

The great city is the same with that referred to in the eleventh chapter, where the two distinguished witnesses were slain. It is also designated the great city, because it is the "city of the great king," the city which he has chosen to place his name there, and where he will reign for ever. It is worthy therefore of this designation, "the great city," and it shall, on the occasion of this tremendous earthquake, be divided into three parts. There, at this time, is Antichrist, and his ten kings; they are in the city Jerusalem, and along with them a multitude of strangers, in number like the small dust, but they shall be as chaff that passeth away. This terrible earthquake shall come upon them without any premonitory warning; "it shall be at an instant, suddenly," and they shall be visited of the Lord of Hosts, with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire." Alarm and consternation shall take hold of them, and they shall flee towards the valley of the mountains, like as men fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. In the 48th Psalm it is written, "lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together, they saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away. Fear took hold upon them there, and pain as of a woman in travail." So shall it be with all the nations, they shall flee far off, and shall

be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind; for behold the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked; the fierce anger of the Lord shall not return until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart. Antichrist, along with his dispersed legions, shall flee, and for the moment be permitted to escape, "and he shall pass over to his stronghold for fear"—his stronghold no longer, for on his return to Rome, his capital, he finds it a heap of ruins; and there, in the place, and on the spot of his once proud pre-eminence, is he seized alive, and cast into hell fire, along with the false prophet, which wrought miracles before him. Rome has been the seat or capital of Satan for many ages, and it now comes in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; and she shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

"And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

"Thou hast destroyed their cities, their memorial shall perish with them." The cities of the nations, without exception, shall fall, and not rise again, and multitudes of the inhabitants shall be buried in their ruins; the islands shall flee away, and the mountains not be found. Islands shall disappear, or be united to continents, and the sites of mountains shall be sought for in vain; the earth will be strangely altered, its features will be entirely changed, and such as have survived the terrible calamity, shall meet death in a still more awful form. "Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And

it shall come to pass that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear, shall fall into the pit ; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare, for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.”

“ And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent : and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

The indications of divine wrath now become awfully manifest. The myriads who composed the armies of Antichrist, who had consulted their safety by flight, and were hastening every man to his own people, and every man to his own country, not only find their flight impeded, but rendered impracticable, by a sudden, a terrible, and continuous shower of hail-stones, of proportions so great, that every stone is declared to be about the weight of a talent (125 lbs.), bringing certain destruction on every head on whom they fall. Inflictions of so fearful a character, seem to say, “ vengeance is mine ; I will recompence, saith the Lord ;” yet they fail to awaken repentance in men, for “ they blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceeding great.” The great type of this judgment is found in the destruction of the kings who came out to fight against Gibeon, because they had made a league with Israel. “ The Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them unto Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord

cast down great stones from heaven upon them, unto Azekah, and they died; they were more who died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." It was on that day also that the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, and hasted not to go down about a whole day, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies; which is another striking type of this, the great day of God Almighty, "for it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be clear nor dark, but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night; but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." And now at length must be introduced upon the stage, the great personage, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things; who is the beginning, the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Now, he comes, who had gone into the far country, for a long time, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. Now he returns, having received the kingdom.

Behold, he comes, a dreadful form,
In wreath of flame, and robe of storm,
On cherub wings, and wings of wind,
The anointed Judge of human kind.

He shall rend the heavens and come down; a solemn and ominous darkness shall veil the sky, for the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

“ Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence ; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about ; his lightnings enlightened the world, the earth saw and trembled. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.” The first great indication of his approach will be “ a total obscuration of the sun, accompanied with a lurid redness in the moon’s disc.” “ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.” This sign of the coming of the Son of Man shall be obvious in all parts of the earth, and will doubtless continue until the whole of mankind have witnessed it ; and so also with the subsequent stages of this mighty procession ; for “ the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee ;” all shall behold the sign of the Son of Man, and shall begin to smite upon their breasts, and to call upon the rocks to cover them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand. “ Many shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward,” and they shall look unto the earth, and behold trouble and darkness—dimness of anguish—and they shall be driven into darkness. Upon the earth shall be distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring, men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking for those things which are coming upon the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. The nations look up with dismay, and as if fascinated with fearful apprehension ; but as yet they see only the terrible preludes of his approach, for he makes darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him are dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At length the

darkness gives place to the light, to the light of a glory far transcending the brightness of the sun : a dazzling glory appears ; a man with his face shining as the sun, and his raiment bright as the light. To this terrible but glorious form shall the many millions of eyes be directed, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. As the sounding of the trumpets which precede the judgments, will no doubt reverberate throughout the earth, so this last trumpet shall be audible in the ears of mankind, for "the trumpet shall sound." "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come, who were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." They shall hear the voice of the Lord ; that same voice which the Apostle heard in the Isle of Patmos ; "a great voice as of a trumpet talking with me," that same voice which sounded in the ears of many hundreds of thousands assembled on the plain, in the wilderness before Mount Sinai, a voice so terrible that even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." For the Lord had said unto Moses "lo I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace ; and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the

trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount. And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off; and they said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Thus, in that great day of God Almighty, shall his voice be heard by every ear; and every eye shall see him; and they also who pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. "The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar from his habitation; he shall give a shout; as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise (the sound of that awful voice) shall come, even to the ends of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked, to the sword." "For my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth, even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be as dung upon the ground." "The indignation of the Lord shall be upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies; he shall utterly destroy them, he shall deliver them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses; and the mountains shall be melted with their blood." It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. "I have

long time holden my peace, saith the Lord ; I have been still, and refrained myself, now will I cry like a travailing woman. I will destroy and devour at once." This voice of the Almighty shall rend the heavens and the earth ; and the earth shall cast out its dead (not all the dead, but only the dead in Christ, for all must rise in their own order : Christ the first fruits, afterward, they that are Christ's, at his coming); then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written (in the 25th chapter of Isaiah), death is swallowed up in victory. O grave where is thy victory, O death where is thy sting. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; like sheep, all are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; but the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; in the morning early shall they arise, like their Lord in the day of his resurrection. In the sight of the astonished world, the graves shall be seen to open, and yield up a small portion of its dead; who shall at once ascend, and fly to the spot where the Lord is; guided by the angels who were sent to gather them, they shall come from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south; from the four winds of heaven. This will not be the work of weeks, or even of days, but as the Apostle describes it, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, like the lightning flash," so shall they proceed from all the places where their dust had lain, to the appointed rendezvous; which will no doubt be in the air, somewhere in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives; for this same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven; "and in

that day his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." When he arose from the sepulchre, he had the same body which was crucified; for the prints of the nails, and the scar in the side were visible, but it was now a spiritual body, and not such as he had it before he died; for flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, neither shall corruption inherit incorruption; but this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So incorruption and immortality was put on by Christ, "for he being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." And in that morning it shall be triumphantly glorious to all who "are found worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." They shall find themselves possessed of new powers and capabilities, greatly transcending all present attainments; even as the winged butterfly is beautiful, as compared with the loathsome caterpillar. "He will change their vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorified body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory, "and the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields, unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate, toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord, it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever." It was to this valley that Ezekiel the prophet was conducted. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. And he caused me to pass by them round about: and behold there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me,

Son of Man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me prophesy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones. Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld in the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, prophesy unto the wind, prophesy Son of Man, and say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of Man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Israel, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, for they are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called the children of the promise, i. e. all who believe the promise are counted for the seed. Behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts, therefore prophesy and say unto them: thus saith the Lord God, behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and

brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, *and I shall place you in your own land*; then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." The transition from death to life shall be instantaneous, and the passage or journey to the place where the Lord of life and glory shall be found, will be effected with the velocity of lightning; they shall fly very swiftly, "to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord." Their eyes shall behold the King in his beauty, and the land, which is very far off; they shall see him, of whom they had heard by the hearing of the ear; but whom, though not having seen, they loved. Then Abraham, who saw Christ's day, and was glad, shall now, with open face, behold that which then was seen as through a glass, darkly, and his joy be immeasurably increased; then Jacob, who waited for God's salvation, shall see it, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; then Job shall see that Redeemer, of whom he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." Then shall the greatly beloved Daniel, who, through faith, "stopped the mouths of lions," stand in his lot, in the place assigned to him as one of the most distinguished of the servants of God, with his companions, Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah, who, through faith, "quenched the violence of fire;" and there also will be the man "who was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles, though he was nothing; who knew in whom he believed, and was persuaded that he was able to keep that which he had committed to him until that

day." That day has come, and his expectations are all realized, and who can conceive the unutterable joy which he shall then experience, surrounded by multitudes whom he had been instrumental in turning to God; of whom he had said, "what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. It will be a day of unutterable joy to all who now look for his appearing; for then, he who is their life, shall appear, and they shall appear with him in glory; all accompanying him, clothed in fine linen, "for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints," "that righteousness which now is of God by faith." "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They now behold him "who loved them, and gave himself for them," and perceive that he is fairer than the children of men; the chief among the tens of thousands, and altogether lovely. The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his bride hath made herself ready, for "a voice came out of the throne, saying, praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the noise of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Now is the time "for the gathering together into one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth,

even in him." The time of the harvest is come, and the wheat will be for ever separated from the tares ; the rod of the wicked will never again rest on the lot of the righteous. Then will be the time of the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory ; and all who have been his disciples indeed, shall sit on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel.

ETERNAL HALLELUIAHs.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluiah ; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God :

2. For true and righteous are his judgments ; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4. And the four and twenty elders, and the four cherubim, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen ; Alleluia.

[This is an ascription of praise and thanksgiving to him who liveth for ever and ever, for the complete overthrow and destruction of the Romish hierarchy, which, under the form and pretence of godliness, hath corrupted the earth, and drawn millions of men to destruction.]

5. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.


7. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him ; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

There is first, universal rejoicing in heaven that now the Lord reigneth, and that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ ; and secondly, that the marriage of the Lamb is come. This is the true marriage, of which all earthly marriages were but shadows and figures. This will be an indissoluble union ; for his church, being now raised from the dead, shall die no more ; therefore shall they ever be with the Lord ; and as a man, when joined to his wife, is one flesh, so the church, eternally united to Christ, shall be one spirit. Long espoused to one husband, she is now presented a chaste virgin to Christ, without spot, or blemish, or wrinkle ; arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Verse 11.—“ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse ; and he that sat on him was called faithful and true ; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

An order of procession is now formed, headed by the Lord himself, who is the captain of our salvation. The heaven is opened to the view of an amazed and confounded world, and the first object which presents itself, is a white horse with its rider. This is he who appeared at the beginning of the vision, when the first seal was opened ; “ and I saw, and behold a white horse : and he that sat on him had a bow ; and a crown was given unto him ; and he went forth con-




quering and to conquer." He is the first and the last, the beginning and the ending. When this work of judgment commences, it is the Lord who begins, and at its consummation he personally appears, and shows that he has been the doer from first to last. The white horse is emblematic of the perfect purity of his mission : "gird thy sword upon thy thigh, thou most mighty, with thy glory, and thy majesty ; and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness, and righteousness ; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." "Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it, and it shall be afraid, and fear, because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of Hosts, which he shake over it." He is called "faithful and true." As Moses was faithful as a servant, so was Christ faithful as a Son, to him who had appointed him ; therefore shall righteousness be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. He is also the true representative of the invisible God ; the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. In his righteousness, he doth judge and make war ; he is the vindicator of righteousness, and comes "to execute judgment on all, and to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, and of all their hard speeches which they have spoken against him ;" and he will set them in order before their eyes, and the punishment which he will inflict shall not be vindictive, but in righteousness.

Verse 12.—"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns ; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself."

As the fire penetrates all bodies, so the eyes of the Lord penetrate all hearts ; quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword : piercing, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow ; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. "On his head were many crowns," for he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and there shall be given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed ; of the *increase* of his kingdom and dominion, there shall be no end ; upon the throne of David, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, for ever.

Verse 13.—"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and his name is called the Word of God."

He comes to execute vengeance on them that know not God. In person he will wound the heads over many countries ; in person "he will tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon his garments, and he will stain all his raiment ;" and as a lion roareth on his prey, so will the Lord cause his terrible voice of indignation to be heard, and it shall reverberate from end to end of the earth. "His name is called the Word of God." This is he of whom John wrote, "in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God, and the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." He is called the Word of God, because it is by his mouth that God speaks to men and angels ; he is the declarer of God, and the great and only medium of communication with God.




Verse 14.—“ And the armies who were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”

These are the splendid retinue of saints, all of them in their glorified bodies, who, just before, had been translated, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and now form in glittering procession behind him; accompanying him, “ with the high praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgement written: this honour have all his saints.” And when the work of judgment is past, they accompany him to the seat of his everlasting government, that they may eat and drink with him at his table, in his kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel; for “ where he is there they shall be also.” This glorious cavalcade, formed in the blue vault of heaven, will no doubt be witnessed by the weeping and wailing multitudes, knowing that they are but the preliminaries of fiery indignation which awaits them.

Verse 15.—“ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

“ Listen, O Isles, unto me; and hearken ye people from far; the Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath

he hid me, and said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. He needeth not a sword in his right hand to execute his purposes of vengeance ; the sword proceeds from his mouth, he speaks, and it is done. With this sword he will fight against all who have not repented ; as he said, “ repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth.” With this sword he is now to smite the nations, for “ the Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.” He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies, he shall wound the heads over many countries ; his arrows shall be sharp in the hearts of his enemies, and the people shall fall under him. This is the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands, which becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth : whosoever falls on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Now, the stone descends, and crushes into powder all his enemies. This is not the man of the people’s choice, but this is he after whom they sent a message, saying, “ we will not have this man to reign over us.” This is the man of God’s choice, he whom God will have to reign. “ Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.” “ I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel ; so also the armies who are with him, who are called, and chosen, and faithful ; they shall share with him in this honour ; for “ he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of



my Father." But the winepress he treadeth alone, even the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God; and this winepress extendeth over the great plain of Esdraelon. All that are most ripe for judgment shall be cast into this winepress, even the clusters of the vine of the earth; and he shall tread it, without the city (Jerusalem), and blood shall come out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, i. e., two hundred miles. On this, the day of his vengeance, it shall be said, "who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was *none* with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment, for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength unto the earth." The winepress of the wrath of God will be the whole country, from Jerusalem, around on all sides, unto the country of Idumea; for "my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse to judgment, for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea." Their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness, for it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into

brimstone, and the land thereof into burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day, the smoke thereof shall go up for ever, from generation to generation ; it shall lie waste, none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

Verse 16.—“ And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

In his times, he shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords ; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see : to whom be honour and power everlasting.

Verse 17.—“ And I saw an angel standing in the sun ; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ; 18. That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them ; and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.”

In that day “ the indignation of the Lord shall be upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies ; he shall utterly destroy them, he shall deliver them to the slaughter.” He will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, and will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible, and will make a man more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” The population of the world will be so diminished by this final act of judgment,

that only a remnant of the human race will survive that great and notable day of the Lord, "for the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his holy one for a flame, and it shall burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day, and shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body; and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth; and the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them." The inhabitants of the world shall be burned, and few men left. The number spared from the fearful visitation will be as the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done; two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord of hosts: the mean man and the great man, the poor man and the rich man, the young and the old, all shall be involved in the one common destruction; all shall fall before him, as by the lightning, which no power can resist. It shall be the judgment of the quick. The number who escape shall be as the small dust in the balance; "it shall be as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; and so also with the buyer and seller, the borrower and the lender: and the cities of the nations shall fall, and their memorial shall perish with them, for all human habitations shall be overthrown, and be no more." And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more, neither the voice of the bridegroom and the bride. The balls, the concerts, the theatres, the fashionable assemblies, the numerous places of amusement, where men frittered away their precious time, and neglected the golden opportunity of obtaining salvation, shall cheer their hearts no more, "for the fashion of this world passeth away," and returneth not again.

Verse 19.—“ And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.”

The beast is the personal Antichrist, whose existence, as has been shown, does not date from the present, but from a long past bygone generation; for he came out of the bottomless pit, being reserved there by God for this final act of crime, and ultimate perdition; even as Elijah had been reserved in heaven, and made to appear on the earth at the close of the dispensation, to prepare the way of the Lord, and make ready a chosen remnant to meet him on the Mount Zion. Along with the beast, are the ten kings, who, with their armies, are gathered together for the purpose of testing their strength of arms with him that sits on the horse, and with his army. They come to set the briers and thorns against the Almighty in battle, but he will go through them, and burn them together. He that sits in the heaven shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision, then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Their blasphemous attempt shall be frustrated.

Verse 20.—“ And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

The beast shall be taken, but not on the instant, for it is written that “he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited, and he shall pass over to his stronghold for fear, and his princes

shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." It is not until he reaches his stronghold, the capital of his kingdom, that he is taken. At first he is permitted to flee with his discomfited hosts, and just when he has reached the place where he anticipates to be in safety from the pursuing adversary, then the grasp of the Almighty seizes him, and along with him, his wicked minister and co-partner in crime; and both are consigned to Geheuna, the hell of torments, and are the first occupants of that lake of fire, "which is prepared for the Devil and his angels; for Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared. God hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

Verse 20.—"And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."


This prodigious multitude thus brought together for their destruction, are here termed a remnant, because Antichrist and his minister are a host in themselves. These all are slain, and their dead bodies given for carrion to the birds of prey. This conflict will be widely different from those in which mankind are wont to be engaged, and is thus described in Isaiah: "every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. The sword of destruction proceeds out of his mouth; he speaks, and they fall before him, he sends out his arrows, and scatters them; he shoots out his lightnings, and devours them. At that time the channels of

waters shall be seen, and the foundations of the world be discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils." "Come and see the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth; he maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

ZECHARIAH, 14th chapter, verse 4.—"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley: and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."


From the Mount of Olives did the Lord ascend; and his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. "This same Jesus, which was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven;" the instant he touches the mountain with his foot, it trembles before him, and cleaves into two parts, opening up a great valley.

Verse 5.—"And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."



When he looketh upon the earth, it trembleth; when he toucheth the mountains, they smoke; when he rends the heavens and comes down, the mountains fall down, and the hills melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. When the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, a great change in the configuration of the country will be produced—a great valley will be opened up, regarding which, we extract as follows, from a paper read by Major Phillips before the British Association of Science, on the consequences which may probably result from this earthquake; and with respect to the words in the text, “ye shall flee like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah.” He observes that “there would be a good reason for flying, for the Mediterranean will come rushing in. Symonds and other surveyors have shewn to us that the level of the Dead Sea is 1312 feet below the Mediterranean, and if we draw a line to represent the major axis of the Mount of Olives, and divide that line by a perpendicular thereto, we shall find that on the east, the division immediately reaches the Dead Sea, and on the west, if prolonged, so as to indicate the course of a very great valley, it will reach unto Ascalon, and cutting off the termination, will bring the valley even unto Azal, on the coast of the Mediterranean; fulfilling Scripture, where it is written, ‘Ascalon is cut off, the remnant of their valley.’ In the plan presented, the small blue lines show the valleys which bound the Mount of Olives to the north, and to the south; while up the centre of the mountain runs the little Valley of Achor, whereof it is written, ‘I will give thee the Valley of Achor for a door of hope.’ And accordingly while you may perceive that the line A B shews the major axis of the mountain, and the line C D gives the perpen-

dicular thereto, passing precisely over Ascalon; we have taken the course of delineating the Straits of Azal, as we venture to term them, according to the present natural water lines, save only where it has seemed appropriate to cut into main channels, and so through water sheds. An earthquake valley being opened, the waters of the great sea, falling eight times the depth of the Falls of Niagara, into the Dead Sea, will speedily cause its waters to rise, and while a mighty whirlpool will be created in the vast basin of the Dead Sea, its rising waters will be quietly permeating the drift sands of four thousand years, which now conceal the southern bed of the Jordan. Yes, as surely as the waters of the Mediterranean shall enter the Dead Sea at an angle—and admirably prepared as the geographical construction of the surrounding mountains is, to produce a grand gyration—so surely will that gyration of commingled waters rise from a hollow swirl to a mighty overpowering swell. And when at length the waters stand upon an heap, and the sustaining power of gyration ceases to uphold; the mass of water falls, and separates, and strikes against the surrounding mountain sides; and now,” “let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein; let the floods clap their hands before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity. And again the waters shall roar and be troubled, and the mountains shall shake with the swelling thereof, but there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.”




Verse 6.—“ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be [alternately] clear, nor dark : 7. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night : but it shall come to pass, that at evening-time it shall be light.”

On this day is fulfilled that of which we find the type in Joshua, the 10th chapter, “ then spake Joshua to the Lord, in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel,” and he said in the sight of Israel, “ sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the Valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.” Thus at evening-time it would be light, and the night being as the day, it would be one day. This that was done of Joshua at the command of the Lord, was intended to prefigure this great day of God Almighty, when his enemies shall flee before him, and be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.”

Verse 8.—“ And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem ; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea : in summer and in winter shall it be.”

The prophet Ezekiel, in vision, saw this, and thus writes : “ afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house ; and behold waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward : for the fore-front of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then

brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate, by the way that looketh eastward ; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters ; the waters were to the ancles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters ; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through ; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand ; and it was a river that I could not pass over ; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of Man, hast thou seen this ? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side, and on the other. Then said he unto me, these waters issue out toward the east country [in the direction of the great cleft in the Mount of Olives] and go down into the desert, and go unto the sea ; which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the waters shall come, shall live ; and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither : for they shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed : it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary ; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof



for medicine." This is that river (literally river), the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God (Jerusalem), the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. There the glorious Lord will make unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby. These then are the living waters which go out from Jerusalem, a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street (or passage) of it, and on either side of the river, is the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, and yielding her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Verse 9.—“ And the Lord shall be King over all the earth : in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.”

Then the Lord shall reign. The Lord is not now reigning, he has gone to the far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return, and when he is returned, having received the kingdom, he raises from the dead his chosen, and to them he says, “ come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.” Then “ the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace,” “ and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth.” One Lord, whose righteous sceptre shall be held over all nations, and peoples, and kindreds, and tongues : for all kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him.

REVELATION, 10th chapter, verse 1.—“ And I saw another mighty angel come down from

heaven, clothed with a cloud ; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire."

This mighty angel is the seventh angel, of whom it is said that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. This mighty angel is the same with the angel of the Lord, so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament Scriptures; or the angel Jehovah who appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, and others. This is the Lord himself, who descends from heaven with the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God. The mighty God, even the Lord, who shall call the earth, from the rising of the sun, unto the going down thereof; "clothed with a cloud;" and his brightness shall be as on the night of his transfiguration, when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, "and a rainbow was upon his head," like the rainbow that was round about the throne, in sight like to an emerald; the emblem of eternal peace; a hallowed circle without a termination. "His face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." It is he who appeared in the Isle of Patmos at the beginning of the vision, whose countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength, and his feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.

Verse 2.—"And he had in his hand a little book open : and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth. 3. And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth. 5. And he lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for

ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer."

The little book now open, is the same which before was sealed, whom no man in heaven was found worthy to take, but only the Son ; who took it out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne, and opened the seals in succession. This little book is the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and this mighty angel is the same with the man clothed in linen, as seen by Daniel (see the 12th chapter). " And I heard the man clothed with linen, who was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half ; and when he (Antichrist) shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people (by the slaughter of the two prophets, the two anointed ones which stand by the God of the earth), all these things shall be finished, by the coming in of the great tribulation, and immediately, or within a few weeks thereafter, the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; then there shall be time no longer ; the end of the world, or rather the end of the age shall come ; the end of the preliminary or introductory dispensation will now give place to eternity ; the eternal era, the age of ages ; that period and dispensation which is to know no end ; when the kingdoms of this world will not be left to other people, for " the Lord himself shall reign for ever and ever."

REVELATION, 11th chapter, verse 15.—" And the seventh angel sounded ; and there were great

voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

When Satan was cast down from heaven to the earth, and all further access to God, as the accuser of the brethren, was denied to him (all which takes place immediately before the time, times, and a half), "I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God, night and day." This overthrow and ejection from heaven, of Satan and his angels, is the first great step toward Messiah's glory, which now and from henceforth is contemplated as an accomplished fact, although nearly four years had yet to elapse before his actual assumption of his crown ; but now this little interval is past, and the angel Jehovah himself sounds the great trumpet, and descends in glory ; a fire devouring before him, and burning up his enemies round about. Now, indeed, the hope so long deferred, is at length realised, and the day has come which the Apostle contemplated, saying, "there remaineth a rest for the people of God," and "the world to come whereof we speak" (Heb., 1st and 2nd chapter); when "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever a sceptre of righteousness, is the sceptre of thy kingdom." "And the four and twenty elders who sat before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." The grand consummation of this great work of redemption, calls forth their adoration and

praise ; for it they had long waited, and now it is realized, to their endless joy ; a joy in which all heaven participates, for thus it is written, “ I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” There is a sense in which Jehovah has been always reigning ; always sitting upon the throne of his holiness, ruling in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; making the wrath of men to praise him, and overruling all events for the accomplishment of his high behests. But an active rebellion, first among angels, and then among men, has greatly disturbed the peace of the universe ; and the great joy evinced in heaven on this occasion, arises from the effectual suppression of all rebellion against his divine authority ; and in addition to this, because he now takes possession of the purchased possession—the inheritance, which by his blood he redeemed—along with man, its fallen lord. The earth, this world, be it small or be it large, as compared with other worlds, is the future and eternal seat of the Most High, “ the place of his throne,” where his glory shall be manifested to angels and to men. When he shall rend the heavens, and come down, “ he shall sit upon the throne of his glory.” Say not, O man, it would be a degradation to the Most High to descend to our humble abode, and make his dwelling there. We do know that he has taken even a lower position, in being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, that by the sacrifice of himself for sin he might condemn sin in the flesh. If he did not think it beneath his dignity to come as a suffering Saviour, much less will he account it so to reign in that world which was the scene of his suffering ; to make the site on which the cross was erected, to be also the place of his throne.

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.” It is then, and not until then, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; reigneth in the full and absolute sense of the word, where none will be suffered, in thought, or word, or act, to controvert his authority; then his kingdom shall come, and then shall his will be done on earth, as it is now done in heaven.

Verse 18.—“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them who destroy the earth.”

The nations were angry. Fierce hostility against God, and against his Christ, pervaded all nations, and drew them together in millions to make war against him. “All nations compassed me about, but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about, but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. They compassed me about like bees: they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.” This is the day to which our Lord referred. When addressing Jerusalem, he said, “ye shall not see me henceforth, until that day when ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” “The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come.” It is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, when he will pour out his fury like fire; for “his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire.” It is the day of the wrath of the Lamb; that wrath, of which it is said, “when once his wrath is kindled but a

little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”
“ Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

“ And the time of the dead, that they should be judged.”

The dead, small and great, shall stand before God. All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. All the dead shall be raised, and all shall be judged ; but as all do not die at the sametime, neither shall all arise at the sametime ; for there is an order in the resurrection : Christ, the first fruits ; next, they that are Christ's, at his coming ; and last, the dead, small and great. Although a thousand years at least will intervene between the resurrection of the “ blessed and holy,” and the general resurrection, it is but as a moment compared with the eternal duration of his kingdom ; the judgment of the dead will be completed within the first two or three thousand years after his advent, which, in comparison to the period beyond, is as a drop to the ocean.”


“ And that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, both small and great.”

The time of rewards precede the time of punishments, therefore those are first raised who are to receive rewards. The great Apostle of the Gentiles, whose life was an unceasing testimony to Christ, he

shall be raised ; and the man who gave but a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, he shall be raised, for he shall in nowise be without his reward. The burning and the shining lights, and those who only emitted the feeblest light, shall alike be raised to everlasting life, although the distinction between them will be very great ; this is shown by the parable of the talents ; and, again, to sit on his right hand and on his left (which are the highest places of honour) is reserved for those for whom it is prepared of the Father. The righteous shall be rewarded, “for the Lord is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shown to his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” Again, “he that giveth to the poor lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given will he repay him again.” As it is the Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom to his little flock, so is it his good pleasure to recall every act of constancy and faithful adherence, and to reward it. To him who prayeth in secret, the Father who seeth in secret, shall reward him openly ; and they who confess him before men, will be acknowledged and confessed by him, before his Father, and before his holy angels ; but all the rewards are of grace and not of debt. We are but unprofitable servants at the best, and what we have done aright, has been done by his grace, and not by our own unaided strength, so that there will be no boasting ; but all shall glory in the Lord.

“And shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth.”

Nothing can be more erroneous than the supposition that the earth is to be destroyed, and to return to its former chaos, so as to be unfit for human habitation.



Far otherwise is the purpose of God, who will create new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and which new earth is no other than the same globe which man now inhabits, under new and greatly improved conditions. There is a strong expression in the Second Epistle of Peter, from which many have come to the erroneous conclusion that the world itself is to be enwrapt in flame for the purpose of annihilation. There is no other Scripture but this only from which such a conclusion could be drawn; but a closer inspection of this passage shows that no such idea was present to the mind of the writer; for though the heavens and earth which now are, are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, it is that by fire which purifies all bodies; the earth may be thus baptized from the long continued impurities which have been committed upon it. The Apostle refers to the world that was before the flood, and declares that it perished; but we should greatly err, if thereby we inferred that it ceased to exist. So with the new heavens and new earth. The context in Isaiah, from which the passage is taken, shows that it is the same heavens and same earth, under a new and altered constitution. Christ does not come to destroy the earth, but them who have destroyed and polluted it by their unholy lives.

ISAIAH, 65th chapter, verse 17.—“Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. 18. For, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19. And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 21. They shall build houses, and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22. They

shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat : for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 33. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble : for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. 24. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock : and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

Thus, the same Jerusalem is here declared to exist after the conflagration, when the earth and the works that are therein are burnt up ; for the coming of the Lord is not for the purpose of destroying the earth, but to destroy the destroyers or abusers of the earth ; those who have corrupted it and polluted it by their presence, and by the wickedness of their lives. He comes to "cast out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity." This is the kingdom which he went into the far country to receive, and to return ; and when he is returned, having received the kingdom, he proceeds to establish it on a basis of righteousness, not permitting the existence of any that offend or do iniquity. "Those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me." The earth is his purchased possession, but is not in actual occupancy until he comes : to that era do the words in the 24th Psalm refer, "the earth is the Lord's, and the

fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods ;” founded and established it, not by the conversion, but by the total overthrow and ruin of the nations ; figuratively expressed here, and in many other Scriptures, by seas and floods. Not the earth, but the destroyers and abusers of its bounties, are to be destroyed. The earth itself “ shall become beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent, and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.”

REVELATION, 11th chapter, 19th verse.—“ And the temple of God was opened in heaven.”

It was the temple of God, which John beheld at the beginning of this vision, when a door was opened in heaven ; it was the temple of God, which the Apostle Paul saw, when he was caught up into the third heavens, and heard unspeakable words ; which temple is Paradise, the habitation of angels, from whence they are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. Out from it they proceed on lightning wings, to fulfill the high behests of him who sitteth upon the throne. This is the Father’s house, wherein are many mansions ; “ the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” When the Lord shall appear in his glory, as it were behind him in the back-ground, the temple of God shall be opened in heaven. He does not come forth from a glory which he leaves behind him, but which accompanies him ; and he is its centre, for “ the Lord is in his holy temple, his eyes behold, and his eyelids try, the children of men.”

“ And there was seen in his temple, the ark of his testament.”

All eyes shall see the ark of his testament in the holy of holies—for now the veil of the temple is rent in twain—and as every eye shall see him, so shall every eye behold the place of his glory, where he dwelt with the Father before the world was. This temple or tabernacle is moveable, and is to descend out of heaven from God. “The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” When the temple of God shall be with men, “the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it.” Thus is this great day at length revealed; unto which day, saith St. Paul, “our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, day and night, hope to come.” In that day “the channels of waters shall be seen, and the foundations of the world be discovered, at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils;” and “thou wilt send out thine arrows, and scatter thine enemies, and shoot out thy lightnings, and discomfit them.” God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind; and behold, at eventingtide, trouble, and before the morning he is not. They shall be left together unto the fowls, and to the beasts of the earth; and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them. It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high (the devil and his angels), and the kings of the earth upon the earth; and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in prison, and after many days shall they be visited. “Then shall the Lord of Hosts reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously;” and the moon shall

be confounded, and the sun ashamed (their glory being eclipsed by the brighter glory of him whose light is above the brightness of the sun), when the Lord of Hosts shall thus reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; for the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation, and said, "this is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it." This is the High Priest after the order of Melchizedec, whose name is, by interpretation, king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace. Before taking possession of his throne as king of peace, he comes forth as king of righteousness, the vindicator of truth, and the avenger of all unrighteousness. He speaks unto the nations in his wrath, and vexes them in his sore displeasure; and like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them; so shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion, and for the hill thereof. As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also, he will deliver it, and passing over, he will preserve it. This is the city which God has chosen to put his name there; the holy city, the city of the great king; the city which alone shall remain unmoved amidst the wreck of countries and the crash of kingdoms. The Mount Zion which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever; the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High: as it is written, "look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; but there the glorious Lord will make unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with

oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. The glorious Lord will cause these healing waters to issue out of the sanctuary, and the fruit which grows by its banks shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. This is the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God will establish Jerusalem for ever ; it will be the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth ; God shall be king of all the earth, and the throne of his holiness shall be Mount Zion ; there the Lord shall command the blessing, even life for evermore. The Lord that made heaven and earth shall give his blessing out of Zion. The whole earth shall be the Lord's, but the land of Palestine is peculiarly the "Lord's land," and Jerusalem the place, the locality of his throne ; there he shall be seen and worshipped, for at that time they shall call Jerusalem "the throne of the Lord ; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem ; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." The Lord Jesus, who is the great God and our Saviour, shall then be in peaceable and eternal possession of his throne, after he hath, with the sword of his mouth, destroyed them that destroyed the earth ; then out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shall shine, and his light shall be glorious. "Many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." But the work of judgment and of vengeance takes precedence, immediately after the resurrection of the

just, who come with him to execute judgment. He puts on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head, the garments of vengeance for clothing, and is clad with zeal as a cloak. "According to their deeds, accordingly will he repay; fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence;" but especially to the gathered hosts at the great plain of Esdraelon, for they are the vine of the earth, and are cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. This is now the kingdom which the God of heaven shall set up, never to be destroyed; and the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom—and all dominions shall serve and obey him—a dominion which shall not pass away, and a kingdom which shall not be destroyed. When the day of vengeance is past, there will be found but few survivors; any spared lives will be chiefly among the far off heathen, where his name had not been heard—"the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory. As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me; the strangers shall submit themselves unto me." These strangers, and the few that have escaped among the nations, with the remnant of Israel, will, together, form the nucleus of future generations, re-peopling the earth; who, being no more exposed to the seductive influences of Satan, will universally give glory to him, to whom alone all glory is due; and in every place incense and a pure offering will ascend to him; and all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall bow before him; for "the Lord shall make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." When the day of his vengeance

is past, the survivors shall fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. The floods shall clap their hands, and the hills shall be joyful together at the presence of the Lord, for he will judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth—no more invisibly, for then he will be seen upon the throne of his glory, as at present he is seen in heaven; God, manifest in flesh, before whom every knee shall bow, and to whom every mouth shall swear. But high above all other nations shall be the people, whom, from the earliest times, he has peculiarly distinguished as his own; “for the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.” Now that they will obey his voice indeed, and keep his covenant, they shall be a peculiar treasure unto him above all people; “and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” “Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God; and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it, shout ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forests, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” “Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places; and the city shall be builded on her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof; and out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of melody, and I will multiply them as the stars of heaven for multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. They shall be my people, and I will be their God, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul, saith the Lord.”

ZECHARIAH, 12th chapter, verse 11.—“In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. 12. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13. The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; 14. All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.”

Chapter 13th, verse 6.—“And one shall say to him, what are these wounds in thy hands? Then he shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.”

They shall behold his hands and his feet, they shall handle him, and see that it is he himself “who was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and by whose stripes have we been healed.” And now he sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. He is come, not to suffer, but to reign; to reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously; he is come to create new heavens and a new earth (as he saith, behold, I make all things new), and he will create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.”

REVELATION, 14th chapter, verse 1.—“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

Christ, as the lion of the tribe of Judah, having returned from the slaughter of his enemies, and having executed his work—his strange work of judgment—now resumes his own natural character, “the meekness and the gentleness of Christ,” and appears as a Lamb; God’s own Lamb, who verily was for-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for us. As a Lamb, he appeared at his first advent, and as a Lamb, he appears in his second advent, for he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He appears on the Mount Zion, “which is the place of his throne, and the place of the soles of his feet, where he will dwell among the children of Israel for ever.” (Ezekiel xliii. 7.) With him, and around him (for so shall the congregation of the people compass thee about), stand an hundred and forty and four thousand; the same who are described in the seventh chapter, consisting of twelve thousand of each of the twelve tribes of Israel who were sealed, and so protected from the judgments under the trumpets, and also under the vials. These are the servants of God, on whose account the judgments were deferred, until the seal of God was impressed on their foreheads. They now appear, with the Lamb, on the Mount Zion, with the “Father’s name written on their foreheads,” thus proving their identity. They are the first fruits of the Jewish Church and nation; the first generation under the new and special covenant made with the house of Israel and Judah (see Jeremiah xxxi. 31 to end); the first of an endless series of generations, world without end; and are to be a nation of kings and priests unto God. Now they have returned to Zion with songs, and with everlasting joy upon their heads, and now the Redeemer has come to Zion, and to them who turn from transgression in Jacob. They are the fruit of Elijah’s ministry; to

whom it was given to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord ; for, “ behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me ; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in. Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts ; but who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver ; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Verse 2.—“ And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder ; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. 3. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the cherubim, and the elders ; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.”

The cherubim and the elders represent the redeemed, both of Jews and Gentiles, who, during the present dispensation, have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ; “ the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven.” “ This new song, accompanied by harpers, harping with their harps, is not sung by them, but before them ; before the throne, and before the cheru-

bim, and before the elders." It is sung by the innumerable multitude of angels, the same whom the prophet had listened to, on the occasion of the Lamb being found worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the cherubim, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Now at the first meeting of the Lamb, with his redeemed remnant of Israel, they sing, as it were, a new song, but the contents of that song, it is not given to us to know; it is an honour reserved for the hundred and forty and four thousand, and shall doubtless open up and reveal to them things fitted greatly to increase their joy in the Lord.

Verse 4.—"These are they who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men; being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

Those who appear with the Lamb, standing on the Mount Zion, do not form the bride, the Lamb's wife, which is a still more exalted position, even the highest to which created beings can aspire; being for those who, coming through much tribulation, and having died in the faith of Christ, are found worthy to attain to the first resurrection: Christ and his church, "the fulness of God who filleth all in all," the

co-heirs of Christ who sit with him on thrones, judging (ruling over) the tribes of Israel. Next in the order of precedence will be the literal seed of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, of whom the hundred and forty and four thousand are the first-fruits; the first-fruits, or nucleus of a nation, who never more shall do iniquity, nor speak lies; a nation whose God is the Lord, a people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. This little remnant are the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them; for behold I will bring a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains, and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there; and Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me. This is Jacob, the Lord's servant, and Jeshurun, whom he hath chosen; for "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, and as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel. O Israel thou shalt not be forgotten of me; I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins. Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it, shout ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; they are his inseparable companions. The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: they are redeemed from among men. In one sense, all who are saved, are redeemed from

among men, but these are peculiarly so, because they still are men in flesh and blood, but redeemed from all iniquity; having had every thought brought into subjection to Christ. In their mouth is found no guile, they live in love, they breathe in love, they walk in love, and they speak the truth in love; they are entirely renewed in the image of him who created them, whose image is love; and finally they are the first fruits unto God and the Lamb; and this leads to the development of an order of things differing most materially from the past, for with the house of Israel and Judah, who now are one, it is no more a time of probation, a time wherein a measure of uncertainty rests, as to the future of their destiny, but an eternity of security in holiness, and consequent blessedness, is theirs; and this is clearly taught from the

NEW COVENANT,

A covenant which commences on the day on which the Lamb sets foot on Mount Zion, and which is as follows (Jeremiah xxxi. 31):—"behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them, to the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." And again, in Ezekiel xxxvii. 21, "behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make

them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all, and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions ; but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them : so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them : and they all shall have one shepherd : they also shall walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever : and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them ; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them : and I will place them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them ; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Again, "and ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else, and my people shall never be ashamed ; so shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain : then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation, for I will cleanse the blood that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Zion. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee

mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. They shall call on my name, saith the Lord, and I will hear them ; I will say it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God. For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me ; there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things ; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they *may fear me for ever*, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good : but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." (See Jeremiah xxxii. 39.) "Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation, I the Lord will hasten it in his time." It is the dispensation of the fulness of times. The house of Israel, will, from henceforth no longer be probationers, no longer be under trial ; the covenant which is then to be made with them, by an everlasting decree of the Almighty, secures them from the possibility of falling. They are Jehovah's plants, and shall not be rooted up, his vineyard of red wine. "I the Lord do keep it ; I will water it every moment : lest any hurt it, I will keep

it night and day." They will form the objects of his unceasing care, and they shall ever hear a voice behind them, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when they would turn to the right hand, and when they would turn to the left. God has made a covenant on their part, as well as on his own, that they shall not turn away from him, that they shall not cease to be his people, and that he will not cease to be their God. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord : my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, *shall not depart out of thy mouth*, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." It is a solemn engagement entered into by Jehovah himself; indemnifying the house of Israel against the possibility of any future backsliding, and departure from him, with its train of terrible consequences, as in the past ages ; and it is important to attend to the reason which he has assigned for this total change in the mode of his administration. He has, in the following passage, declared it : "for I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth : for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him : I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his *ways, and will heal him* ; I will lead him also, and restore comforts to him, and to his mourners." (See Isa. lvii. 16.) This covenant is made exclusively with the house of Israel, and not with the other nations of the earth ; it is a covenant which brings with it everlasting security to the seed of Abraham ; but although it may be eventually extended to the Gentile nations, it is not so in the first instance ; on the contrary, events (long after the reign of Messiah has been

established) will show that they have no such indemnification. Vast multitudes among the nations, will, toward the end of the first thousand years of his government, rebel against him, and the judgments will be both speedy and summary. "But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; they shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end." Then the blessing pronounced on Rebekah, when she left her father's house to go to be united to Isaac, will be fulfilled. "And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, "thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those who hate him." Although the earth, from the then absence of sea, will be greatly enlarged, and capable of containing perhaps many thousand times the number of inhabitants, yet a period may come, when even the earth will be too strait to contain its population; but the resources of the Almighty are infinite and boundless, and being as yet a matter not revealed, what he might be pleased to do, in such circumstances, it is not for man to search into, for "secret things belong to God." It is to be remarked, that about the time of the flood, the tenure of human life was restricted to a hundred and twenty years; but now the cause for the restriction being removed, the life-time of men will again be prolonged to its original period; and so it is declared that in the new heaven, and new earth, which the Lord will make, "as the days of a tree, shall be the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." And death, when it does come, will not then be the king of terrors, because its sting will be wholly removed; it will probably be as the change from the grasshopper state, unto that of the winged butterfly; a change effected without fear, without pain, without sorrow

or regret; a change which will not be, as now, invisible to mortal eyes, but which will be seen, admired, and longed for, the goal to which all will aspire, and to which all shall attain.

It will be important to examine into the nature of that worship, which will be acceptable to God, in the coming age; the age of ages, when Messiah shall sit on the throne of his father David, and shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever. It will consist in

THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THE ORDINANCES, AND STATUTES, AND LAWS, AS ENJOINED BY MOSES.

Those ordinances and laws were not intended to be of a temporary character, but of perpetual duration. The feasts of the Lord, and the holy convocations, viz., the feast of the passover, the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of Pentecost, and of ingathering, and the numerous convocations of the seventh month, all are declared (many times repeated) to be statutes for ever, in all their dwellings throughout their generations. To give a few of numerous instances where perpetuity is clearly indicated—in Leviticus xxiii. 39. “In the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord, seven days; on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day there shall be a Sabbath; and ye shall take you on the first day, boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days, and ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations.” Thus also in the chapter following, it was commanded that the lamps in the tabernacle should be kept burning con-

tinually ; and it is added, "it shall be a statute for ever in your generations." When God says for ever, he means it. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away. Assuredly, the laws, ordinances, and statutes, given to the children of Israel, are of perpetual, yea, of eternal obligation, and shall never be disannulled. This is one great purpose of the coming mission of Elijah—"Elijah truly shall come, and restore all things." How was Christ so zealous for the honour of the temple? as it is written, "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." It was but stone, and lime without, and wood, covered with gold, &c., within, but it was his Father's house, and the offerings made therein were sacred; so shall it be in the restoration of the temple, the whole Jewish ritual shall be fully restored; yea, and God shall be pleased therewith. In the fifty-first Psalm, it is said, "do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem," and it is added, "then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." When Israel has passed through his final trial, and has entered into the wealthy place, he saith, "I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. I will offer unto thee burnt-sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams: I will offer bullocks with goats." (Psalm xvi. 13.) This refers to the day of salvation, the day of Israel's final emancipation from all bondage; and the speaker is the Son of God, who is high priest over the house of God; high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. In Isaiah, 60th chapter, where Jerusalem's glory is predicted, when the Lord shall arise upon her, and his glory shall be seen upon her;..

when the Gentiles shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising, then all they from Sheba shall come—shall come to Jerusalem, the place of his throne—bringing gold and incense, and showing forth the praises of the Lord: then also “shall all the flocks of Kedar be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee.” [For what purpose shall they be gathered, and to what object shall they minister?] “They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.” The house of his glory is the temple, which shall be erected to his praise; concerning which so minute instructions are given to the Prophet Ezekiel, commencing with the 40th chapter, wherein he was instructed to show to the house of Israel (when they shall be ashamed of all that they have done in the past) the form of the house and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the laws thereof; and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house. “Son of Man, thus saith the Lord God: these are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. And the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord God. And they shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.” It is recorded in Isaiah that the glory of Lebanon shall come (or be brought) to Jerusalem, viz., the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together [and for what

purpose?] to beautify the place of my sanctuary ; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. When the Lord makes known, by Malachi, the terrors of that day, which shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch, there is added these words, “remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments ; and along with this command is connected the promise, behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet ; who, said our Lord, to his Apostles, “when he is come, he shall restore all things.” It appears, therefore, most certain that the laws and ordinances, given with such solemnity to the children of Israel in the wilderness, were never intended to be revoked or abrogated, but to continue for the guidance, and direction, and obedience of the house of Israel ; yea, and of all nations (after that the earth becomes the seat of Jehovah’s glory), through eternal ages, world without end. Jehovah has declared that he never had pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, abstractly considered ; his divine pleasure has ever consisted in beholding them as types and figures of the one sacrifice. Viewed in this aspect, the Lord did smell a sweet savour, and did delight therein, and the same divine pleasure will be felt in the prototype as in the antitype, and be continued for ever. Let the proud heart of the Gentile, therefore, bow to the will of the Almighty, for “he is wise in heart, and mighty in strength. Who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered ; who removeth the mountains, and they know not ; who overturneth them in his anger ; who shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble ; who commandeth the sun, and it

riseth not, and sealeth up the stars ; who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. If he take away, who can hinder him ? and if it be his sovereign pleasure to restore, who will say unto him, what doest thou ? Are we wiser than God ? Can we judge better than God as to what should be the form of his government, and the mode of his proceedings in the ages to come ? Let us reverently bow down before our maker, and say, even so, O thou all-wise and all-mighty, for so it seemeth good in thy sight. The arguments of the Apostle in the Hebrews do not disprove the restoration of Jewish ordinances ; they only show that those ordinances were but shadows and figures of the true, until he should come ; so those ordinances will, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, form powerful and impressive symbols of the great sacrifice which alone makes the comers thereunto perfect. But, it may be asked, if the comers to the one sacrifice are perfected and need no more offering for sin, why then should sin-offerings continue ? They continue for the same reason that they were instituted at the first, viz., not to cleanse from sin, but to point the soul to the blood of the incarnate God, which alone can cleanse, and hath cleansed. They will form perpetual memorials of the one sacrifice, and thus the memory of that greatest work of God shall never die out, nor be forgotten. God will unfold to his people the meaning of all the ordinances and statutes, which he requires them to observe, so that in the clear light, as to the purpose which all represent and prefigure, or rather profigure, they shall intelligently give glory to God, and thus shall he receive the worship which he loves. They shall worship him in spirit, and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. The things which, under the law, were only seen darkly and

dimly, shall then be clearly understood by all ; for no man shall need to say unto his brother, know the Lord, for they shall all know him, from the least to the greatest ; and knowing him, they will possess great light on all those things which formerly were entire mysteries ; their path shall be ever onward, like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. “ And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant (the Beloved), he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant (the Beloved) a prince among them : I, the Lord, have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land ; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods ; and I will make them, and the places round about my hill, a blessing ; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season, there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the fields shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord.” (Ezekiel xxxvi.) “ And I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them, for evermore.” (Ezekiel xxxvii.)

THE IMPRISONMENT OF SATAN.

CHAPTER XX.

1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

The name of the angel entrusted to execute this judgment is not given. It may be the Lord himself, or it may be some one of his ministers, but he brought down from heaven with him, from him that hath the keys of hell and of death, a key to open and to shut, and a great chain in his hand; thus showing that there does exist a great prison house, from which there is no escape; which being shut up, cannot be opened, without that key, which he holds, who openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth. But there is also to be attached to this state prisoner a great chain, i. e., a chain of great length, admitting to him ample scope in that fearful abyss, both as to his goings to and fro, and to his walking (or flying), up and down in it, and at the sametime fixing a stern limit, beyond which he can not extend. The person thus doomed to be immured for a long period, in darkness which may be felt—the

blackness of darkness—where no ray of light can enter, is Satan. The history of this being is a very sad one, and may be briefly told. He was originally an angel of light. It is highly probable that he held the distinguished position of an archangel, or the chief of those principalities or powers which have now become the rulers of the darkness of this world. He fell from the original condition of purity in which he was created; he kept not his first estate; he left his own habitation, and drew after him a vast multitude of angels, not fewer than a third part of the whole; so that it was a great rebellion which took place in heaven, and he was the leader. When the world became ready for man's habitation, and God had placed a single pair in the Garden of Eden, as the progenitors of a whole race, to whom the earth was to be given for an inheritance, this wicked one came down, and beholding them, desired to involve them and their posterity in his own ruin. He could not however approach them without permission, any more than as we find, in a subsequent age, could he approach to tempt the patriarch Job, until he was allowed of God. He must have obtained leave to tempt our first parents, and with this understanding also, that if he prevailed, he should himself be installed in their place, as lord of the earth, until, in the fulness of time, the seed of the woman should contend with him, under all the enfeebled conditions of the fall, and prevailing against him, should bruize his head, and be his destruction. Satan did prevail, and brought sin into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men. The Devil became, and is now, the god of this world, and the prince of the power of the air, the chief ruler of the darkness of this world; and although always under limitations, has power to inflict diseases (for all disease

is from the Devil), and has also the power of death." For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil; and accordingly St. Peter to Cornelius expressly declares, that after he commenced his public ministry, he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil; thus all his healings of the sick, and of palsied persons, his deliverance from devil-possession, his removal of blindness, of deafness, dumbness, and death, were all expressed in that word, "healing all that were oppressed of the Devil." To be delivered over by the Church unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, was simply to be handed over to his tender mercies, which are cruel, and of which we see a striking instance in the history of Job, the perfect man who feared God, and eschewed evil, and of whom he had not his equal upon the earth. There is much to be learned concerning this, the great enemy of our race, in the book of Job. As yet, he is not cast out of heaven, although most probably a large train of his followers are—for they are said to be cast down to hell, reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, until the judgment of the last day; yet do they not all appear to be finally expelled from heaven, until their leader be cast down, and then they are cast down with him, first to the earth, and afterwards to the bottomless pit. This enemy is allowed to appear among the Angels of God, as if he still were an angel of light, for it is written, "when the Sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also amongst them," as one who had a permitted right, which was not called in question. With them he appears to have had no intercourse, but waited for an audience from the Most High, when he could pour out his accusations against the brethren. His account of himself, when interrogated by the

Almighty as to whence he came ? he said, "from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it ;" answering to the description of the Apostle, "he goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may destroy." He traverses the earth in its length and breadth ; with lightning speed he proceeds from east to west, and from north to south, keeping strict surveillance over his deluded millions, lest any should turn aside from the broad road that leadeth to destruction. When the word of the kingdom is sown among the wayside hearers, then cometh the wicked one and taketh away that which was sown in their hearts : he leadeth them captive at his will, they listen to his suggestions, and obey his commands. Being the servants of sin, they are the bond slaves of the Devil, who is the god of this world ; the great governing power, who, but for the restraints that are placed upon him, would soon turn the earth into a pandemonium ; which, indeed, he shall do, when those restraints are removed, for he who now letteth (or hindreth, or keepeth back), will let until he be taken out of the way ; and then shall that wicked one be revealed, the son of perdition, and incarnation of all wickedness and crime. But for the restraining mercy and long-suffering of God, the earth would soon be filled with maniacs—with devil-possessed persons—causing them to inflict horrible evils upon themselves, and upon each other. The Devil is that strong man to whom our Lord refers as keeping firm possession of his house, and could only be ejected by one that was stronger than himself ; and *as yet*, this has not been done ; he holds possession, and will hold, until that day when the stronger than he casts him out. The Devil takes pleasure in the doings of mankind, "he savoureth not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," and no

soul ever yet returned from the paths of vice to God, without the most strenuous opposition on the part of this great, although unseen, adversary. His attention is particularly directed to such as are seeking after God, with the view of leading them back again to the paths of error, that they may return, like the dog, to his vomit, and like the sow that was washed, to its wallowing in the mire. If the feet of the righteous do slip, if he fall from his steadfastness, Satan's object is to prevent him from rising again, or returning any more to the rock of his strength. He pursues him from day to day with unmitigated hostility, and never, until the closing hour of his life, shall he be left unattacked by those fiery darts—those subtle suggestions—which, to resist, require the shield of faith; and not the shield of faith only, but the whole armour of God, for many are the wiles of the Devil. As he is allowed approach to God, he brings accusations against the people of the Lord, "he accuseth them before our God day and night," and his charges are often not baseless. But we have an all-powerful intercessor, an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. When Satan has no real grounds of accusation against the saints, he boldly assumes their guilt in circumstances of trial and temptation: thus he had no just accusation to bring against Job, but boldly affirmed that such would not be wanting if he were put to the test. When the Lord said to him, "hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is not a man like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in

the land ; but put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, behold, all that he hath is in thy power ; only upon himself put not forth thy hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord"—went forth to ruminate in the depths of his own fallen, but still great and powerful mind, as to the most effectual method by which to overthrow the faith of Job, and so cause him to depart from his integrity ; and the plan adopted shows with what a skilful enemy we have to contend. He brought his calamities suddenly upon him, one after the other, and took care that the last should be the heaviest ; but the temptation failed, for Job meekly received the terrible blow ; " he arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither : the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly," and thus was Satan proved to be a liar, who had boldly asserted that he would curse God to his face. It is important to observe, by the way, the means of destruction which are available by this enemy, when not restrained by God. There is little difficulty in understanding how the ~~Sabeans~~ should fall upon the oxen and the asses, and how the Chaldeans should fall upon the camels, and carry them away, destroying the servants, sent for their protection and defence, with the edge of the sword. The Devil entered into their hearts just as he did into the heart of Judas, when he went forth in the black and dark night to betray his Lord. The lust of covetousness was engendered by a suggestion from the wicked one, and the means to be adopted were also the fruit, partly perhaps of his suggestions,

and partly of their own plannings; but certainly the first thought came from him, and met with a willing response, for the wicked "drinketh in iniquity as the horse drinketh in the water." All the other parts of this diabolical stratagem show that Satan is not an imaginary being but has a real existence, and great powers of mischief. It is dangerous to undervalue the powers and resources of this enemy, who has proved the ruin of millions, of whom it is declared, that "he deceiveth the whole world." Great in his fall, he now exerts those energies for evil, which at first were given him for good. He caused fire to fall from heaven, which consumed the seven thousand sheep, with all the shepherds who were feeding them: for he does possess the means of destruction by fire, and is only hindered from its exercise by the restraining hand of God. This restraint will be removed at the close of this dispensation, during the reign of Antichrist, for then he will bring fire down from heaven in support of Antichrist's blasphemous pretensions. At that time he will place Antichrist upon the neck of the whole world, and himself upon the neck of Antichrist, and the world will both worship the beast and the dragon, which gives power to the beast; all nations, and languages, and peoples, and tongues, shall openly fall down and worship him. Satan is called the prince of the power of the air; and this power he manifested, by producing a violent hurricane, which smote the four corners of the house where Job's family were assembled on a festive occasion; the house fell upon them, and killed them, one only escaping, by the intervention of Satan, for the purpose of conveying the harrowing tidings, to produce the intended shock, that Job might murmur against God as the author of his afflictions. It was the Devil that brought that great gale upon the lake

of Galilee to intimidate the disciples, and make them distrust their Lord ; but Jesus arose and rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm. In Satan we have a formidable enemy to deal with, but “greater is he that is for us, than he who is against us.” Michael the archangel is he that is for us, and by him and his angels shall Satan and his angels be expelled from heaven ; and when that event shall be accomplished, then, it is said, “he hath but a short time.” This being is a liar, and the father of it ; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : and he was a murderer from the beginning.

Verse 3.—“And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled ; and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

In that day, the Lord with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan, the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent ; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. It shall come to pass, in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high (the Devil and his angels), and the kings of the earth upon the earth ; and they shall be gathered together (the rulers of the darkness of this world, with all the countless multitudes of their victims, the souls of lost men) as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. The bottomless pit, or that vast cavity within the round world, is the prison-house of the condemned—called bottomless, on account of its diurnal rotation, so that no body cast into it can

ever reach a bottom. There is no other way of explaining the term "bottomless," for to every created thing there must be a limit in breadth and length, in depth and height; the infinite alone is limitless; but this explanation is natural, and quite in accordance with the established belief of the earth's diurnal motion. Into this dread abyss—this great prison-house, where there will be room for all—shall the Prince of Darkness himself have his habitation, and even there shall not be permitted to roam at pleasure, but be confined within a limited circuit, extending no farther than the chain with which he is bound, shall permit. This is that "horrible pit" into which our Lord himself went in the interval between his death and resurrection; where he preached the gospel to them that perished by the flood, that they might be judged according to (upon the same principle as) men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. God, his Father, brought him up out of this horrible pit, and set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings. "Many shall see it, and shall fear, and shall trust in the Lord." This is that doomed abode into which all the spirits of the lost descend; of whom, it is said, "they shall go to the generation of their fathers, and shall never see light." It is the pit of destruction, the place of darkness, of weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. This is that pit which shall open wide her mouth, and all their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it; that pit which is destined to be also the place of torment, into which Antichrist and the false prophet shall be the first to descend bodily. "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared: he (Jehovah) hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the

Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." The dimensions of this fearful furnace will be comparatively small at first, but will be afterwards enlarged, until the whole cavity becomes "a furnace of fire;" whosoever shall not be found written in the book of life, shall be cast therein, and be tormented day and night, for ever and ever; and the mouth thereof shall be open, and be exposed to the eyes of "the nations of them that are saved," for they shall go forth, and look upon the bodies of them who have transgressed against God; for "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh; they shall be exposed to the gaze of the righteous; they shall be exposed to shame and everlasting contempt." This is the purpose of the Most High, let who will gainsay it; and he will be justified in his doings, and be clear when he is judged. Thither the enemy of mankind will be conveyed, and be shut up in it, first as a prison-house, and afterwards as a place of torment; a seal will be affixed by the hand of power, so as to prevent its being broken, until opened by his own divine command, and for all-wise purposes. The period of this incarceration will be a thousand years—literally a thousand years—which is the seventh day, the day on which Jehovah rested from all his works which he had created and made. There is a great meaning (partly hidden) in that passage, that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." A million of years, or any given number of years in the scale of eternity is comparatively as one day, but the millennial thousand years is the seventh day, the day of Jehovah's rest from the work of redemption. Thus, in the 3rd chapter to the Hebrews, it is said, that Joshua brought not Israel into the promised rest, for the Holy Ghost speaketh of another day; and this

thousand years is that "other day," the day of rest, which remains for the people of God. How near then is that day, whether we take the commonly received, or the Jewish chronology? According to the latter, some three hundred years have yet to run until the six thousand years are ended; and according to the former, only about 130 years: then the six days work, of a thousand years each, typified by the six days work of creation, will be completed; but apart from this, as has been already shown, the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, clearly indicates that the time is near for the destruction of the image, by the stone, cut out of the mountain without hands. The ten toes of the image, distinctly defined, have alone to come into manifestation; then the present age (called time) will be completed, and the eternal era will commence; and will *be governed* visibly, and in person, by the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth. In the very day that the six thousand years shall be fulfilled, will the Lord come forth from the secret of his habitation; like as the children of Israel departed from Egypt, on the very day that the number of years were completed, that God had before indicated to Abraham. There is an exactitude of purpose as to time with the Almighty in all his divine plans, and all will be accomplished to a given moment. Thus when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son; so when the set time is come to favour Zion, the Lord will come the second time, and shall appear in his glory. Could any thing different be expected from the all-wise God? of whom it is written, "the counsels of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart unto all generations." The seventh day will usher in the glory and blessedness of Messiah's reign, which is also the reign of God the Father; for the Father and the Son are one

and indivisible, and in the Son dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Here then is the watchman's reply to the question, "watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? The watchman answered, the morning cometh, and so doth the night." When the Apostle wrote his epistles, the great image was on its legs of iron, and the feet, part of iron, and part of clay, had not come into manifestation. Even then, "the night was far spent, and the day was at hand." How much farther is it now spent? how much nearer ist he day at hand now? The day-break is near, even the dawn of an eternal day. After this long night, time shall end, and the angel of the covenant shall lift up his hand, and swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there shall be time no longer. Truly "the fashion of this world passeth away:" they that love him shall receive a kingdom that cannot be moved; they shall dwell in a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. During this period of a thousand years, the Devil, who now exerts so great an influence in the world, will be removed; there will then exist all the opposite influences of good, to draw the newly-formed nations to God; "the Gentiles shall come to him from the ends of the earth, and shall say "surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." "All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall bow before him;" "and many people shall go, and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Verse 4.—“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image; neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

“Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee. What shall we have, therefore? Jesus answered his disciples, ye who have followed me: in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel.” Now is the fulfilment of this promise, “I saw thrones, and they sat on them;” now, also, is the realization of the hope so long cherished by the general assembly and church of the first-born, “thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign *on the earth*.” Now, the Son of Man has come, and sits upon the throne of his glory; and his saints sit on thrones, judging (directing, instructing, and governing) the tribes of Israel; which at first will be only a remnant, but will increase eventually to numberless millions; and in like manner will the thrones of judgment be enlarged, and ever increase in importance, in dignity, in splendour, and glory; “for the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, besides thee, O God, what thou hast prepared for them that love thee.” It will, indeed, be “an exceeding great, and an eternal weight of glory.” Among the distinguished occupants of those thrones, are especially mentioned the martyrs, who suffer under the coming reign of terror; the reign

of Antichrist. The Apostle saw thrones occupied by men who had been dead, and were now alive ; he saw the souls of the martyrs, and they lived ; their souls were alive before, and their being declared now to live, must refer to the resurrection of their bodies : they lived and reigned with Christ. As Christ has risen from the dead, and lives in his glorified body, so do they now live in bodies fashioned like unto his glorified body ; with him, in his kingdom, and in the kingdom of his Father. They reign with Christ a thousand years ; not that a thousand years will terminate their reign, for it is written, in the 22nd chapter, “and they shall reign for ever and ever ;” as also, in Daniel, where it is said, “the saints shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” Their’s is “a crown of glory which fadeth not away ;” they are to inherit a kingdom prepared for them, and intended for them, from the foundation of the world. A thousand years would be as nothing if their glory were then to terminate ; it is because the thousand years, being the seventh day, the concluding day of the first week, is a time of rest ; while Satan is incarcerated, and unable to do mischief, or disturb the quietude of the earth. There is still a future day of rest, which possibly may be after another intervening period ; when “the Son, having subdued all things under his feet, shall yield up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.”

Verse 5.—“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death, hath no power ; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Not all are counted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, but only they who sleep in Jesus; for as Jesus died and rose again, so they who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. All will be raised, for "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" but not all at the same time, but every man in his own order: "Christ, the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming;" but the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years are finished. The rest of the dead continue in their graves until the day when the books shall be opened, and the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and so it is written, "they are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise;" "they shall consume away in the grave from their dwelling, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning." (Psalm xlix. 14.) For the upright will be raised up, having attained to the honour for which the Apostle panted, viz., "that he might attain unto the resurrection from [out of or from] the dead." (Philippians iii. 11.) Thus, as the dead body of Christ was by the power of God reanimated and quickened, so shall all the dead in Christ be reanimated and quickened; out of the seed which was sown in dishonour, shall bodies be raised in glory. "Thy dead shall live; even as my dead body shall they arise." They that dwell in the dust shall awake and sing, for their dew shall be as the dew of herbs, but (thy) dead only shall live—not all the dead—and to them only shall be brought to pass, the saying that is written, "death is swallowed up in victory." (See 1st Cor. xv. 54, and Isaiah xxv. 8.) He that hath part in the first resurrection is blessed and holy; blessed in the full sunshine of God's love, and unblameable in holiness before God. On such, the second death shall have no power, but they shall be priests of

God and of Christ. The priesthood is the highest order in creation, because it admits to the nearest access to Jehovah : it is an exaltation which arises from our union with him, who took upon him our nature, and who is the great high priest of our profession. They are a royal priesthood, combining the dignity of kings, with the still higher dignity of priests. As priests, they will have sacrifices to present, and as kings, they will have territories to govern, and subjects over whom to reign. These are the ancients, concerning whom, it is spoken, "the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." They sit with him on thrones, while thousand, thousands, minister to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him; his garment is white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne as the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

JERUSALEM A REJOICING.

CHAPTER XXI.

1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea."

2. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.


3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

This is the new heaven and new earth, of which St. Peter speaks : " we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ;" as in Isaiah, " for, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create ; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people : and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." The first thing to be observed in the new heavens and new earth, is the identity of Jerusalem, described as formerly a city of mourning, but now of joy ; thereby showing that the heavens and the earth are the same,

but differently organized; for as the heavens and the earth which were before the flood, being overflowed with water, perished, and yet re-appeared in all their identity, so will the present heavens and earth, which formerly were destroyed by water, now be purified as by fire, for then, indeed, will be the baptism with fire. "For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." (Malachi iv. 1.)

"And there was no more sea."

The sea, that vast body of water which occupies so large a proportion of the terraqueous globe, will then disappear, be dried up, and be no more. This itself will be a prodigious change in the economy of our world, for if there be no more sea, there can be no more rain clouds, no more showers, no more rivers, and whence then will come the supplies of water which now form an essential element of life. God, who provided that element at the first, and gave to it the important place which it holds in the system of nature, will provide some other method still better fitted to answer the purposes of the new heavens, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In the beginning, when the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and when there was not a man to till the ground, "there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." One river there will be, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. This river shall rise from beneath the sanctuary, issuing out from under the threshold of the house, eastward from the right side



of the house at the south side of the altar. It shall, in its commencement, be but a stream of running water, but will rapidly rise into a mighty river, and its passage will be toward the east country, thence down into the desert, and go into the sea, i. e. (probably the channel which had formed the bed of the great deep), which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live, and there shall be a very great multitude of fishes, because these waters shall come thither, for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh; and by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side, and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed. It shall bring forth new fruit, according to his months (i. e., monthly), because these waters, they issued out of the sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. (Ezekiel xlvii.) This is the river described in the 22nd chapter of Revelation, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb; for the place of his sanctuary is also the place of his "throne; the place of the soles of his feet, where he will dwell among the children of Israel for ever." This river will answer all the purposes which the rain clouds from the sea now accomplish, bringing abundant supplies of nourishing and healthful food to all flesh, such as man had at the beginning, when "out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food, and commanded the man, saying, "of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The river of

Eden was the type of the river of God, which is to issue out of the sanctuary; which also may part into many heads, and irrigate the earth, bringing fulness of blessing to all peoples, and nations, and tongues; for “then shall the earth yield its increase, and God, even our God, shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.” (Psalm lxxvii.) This is the only Scripture from which we learn that “there shall be no more sea;” but one declaration from God is sufficient; he can supply whatever is necessary to life and healthful nourishment, by processes differing entirely from the past. In corroboration of this view, it is important to observe that he that sitteth upon the throne, saith, “Behold I make all things new.” Thus the whole bed of the deep will be converted into dry land; and with this corresponds the account which is given of the final resurrection described in the 20th chapter. At that time Satan shall be loosed from his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations that are upon the earth; and it is said “they shall go up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints about.” This would seem indicate that the range shall be greatly widened, with no sea to intercept or obstruct them in their journey from the ends of the earth.

“And I John saw the holy city—new Jerusalem—coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

John refers to the holy city as if he had already written concerning it; but there is no previous mention of it, except in the Epistle to the Church of Philadelphia, in these words:—“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God,

and he shall go no more out ; and I will write upon the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven, from my God, and I will write upon him my new name." This city he now beholds coming down, in gradual descent ; a majestic structure, a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. It is the same with the temple of God, so often mentioned in this book, and as in the chapter referred to, where it is said, " him that overcometh, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." This city, described with such minuteness in the 21st chapter, is the present habitation of his holiness ; the heavenly sanctuary, the tabernacle which God pitched, and not man ; who sitteth between the true cherubim, and hath the golden altar before the throne. The furniture, made by Moses, after the pattern shown him in the Mount, were true imitations of realities in actual existence. The Lord prepareth his throne in the heavens, but its eternal establishment shall be on the earth, with reference to which, it is said, in the 93rd Psalm, " the world also is established that it cannot be moved. Thy throne is established of old ; thou art from everlasting." Connect this with the words addressed to the Son, in the 45th Psalm, and quoted, as applying to him, by the Apostle, in Hebrews, 1st chapter—" thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." And, again, connecting this with the words spoken to the Virgin Mary, by the Angel Gabriel—" the Lord God shall give to him the throne of his Father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." The whole earth shall be illumined, and be for ever irradiated by his glory ; but the holy of holies is the heavenly Jerusalem, which cometh down, proceeding from heaven, out of

the invisible regions, where it now is, and will then rest with its glittering and glorious foundations on the globe which we inhabit. It is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where are an innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and church of the first-born.

“Prepared as a bride.”

The figure of a bride is applied to Jerusalem, in Isaiah, 54th chapter—“thy maker is thine husband.” She is spoken of also as a mother bereaved, and next as a joyful mother of children; by the sudden and unexpected influx of those whom the Lord had hidden from the face of the serpent. She shall no more be termed forsaken, neither shall her land any more be termed desolate, but she shall be called Hephzibah, and her land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in her; and her land shall be married, for as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” Thus shall the holy city be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Verse 3.—“And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

It is not said that men are to be conveyed in their glorified bodies, up to the third heavens, where is

now the tabernacle of God, but that the tabernacle of God is to be with men ; in accordance with which, it is beheld " coming down from God out of heaven." It will come down to the earth, its foundations will rest upon it, and it will be accessible by its twelve gates, for them that are the excellent of the earth, for they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. The tabernacle of God shall indeed be with men ; and Mount Zion will be incorporated with it, or in some way annexed to it, being " the perfection of beauty." " This is my rest for ever, said Jehovah ; here will I dwell, for I have desired it. But will God, in very deed, dwell with man upon the earth ? whom even the heaven of heavens cannot contain ? So assuredly it hath pleased him to declare. And that God, who, when the fulness of time was come, did not despise the virgin's womb, nor a lengthened sojourn upon the earth, but humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross, will not count it beneath his dignity to return to the same world, and make it the centre, and the glory of all other worlds ; also of thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers. This then is the grand consummation, and until which the heavens have received him. The world is destined for endless habitation—a world without end—and he who is both David's son, and David's Lord ; he who is " Lord of all," and " God over all, blessed for ever," even he shall reign on earth. He is the " Almighty," " the living God," the Lord of Hosts our God, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Should it be so that other worlds do exist, or are in process of formation, still this world will be the central globe of the universe, and the " Holy of Holies" to all other places of his dominion. When the incarnation of God is considered, it bears out this view ; for if God dwells in our nature, it is but reasonable that he

should make our dwelling place his own ; and this he will do. He will visibly dwell with men upon the earth ; and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God ; and in his presence is the fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Verse 4.—“ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away.”

The new Jerusalem, which is the city of the Lord of Hosts, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and to be revealed, and come down to the earth, shall be amply capacious, possessing abundant space for all its glorified inhabitants ; and in it shall be many mansions (or separate glorious residences), for if it were not so, our Lord would have told us. Here shall dwell “the great congregation, who shall, on stated occasions, meet around and before the throne ; ever ascribing salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. They shall serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat ; but the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Earthly things are passed away, and shall not return ; “the former troubles shall not be remembered nor come into mind ;” the future will spread out into endless ages, full of bliss, ever increasing in the knowledge of him whose resources are

boundless ; the past will recede into its real dimensions, and appear as a moment, as the Apostle writes, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Verse 5.—"And he that sat upon the throne said, behold, I make all things new."

The Apostle writes as having before adverted to him that sat upon the throne, as in the preceding chapter, where he says, "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them." He, now sitting on this throne, saith, behold, I make all things new. How much is implied in these words ? The aspect, both of the heavens and the earth, will undergo a great change ; for the curse being removed, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle tree ; and shall be to the Lord for a name, and for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off." The earth will now be blessed, for his sake, who is the Lord our righteousness. Thorns and thistles shall it no more bring forth, but, "it shall yield its increase." The wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. There shall be a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God ; this river shall enlarge its channels, and carry its benign and healing influences over all lands, spreading *health*, and fulness of bread or provision over the whole earth ; for the trees on its banks shall bear twelve manner of fruits, and shall yield her fruit every month. So rapid shall be vegetation, that the reaper will overtake the sower ; before a field has been well sown, the harvest will have arrived.

All will be in perfection, and men shall eat and praise the Lord in the courts of his holiness. Among the new things then to be established, will be a great increase of light upon the earth, "for the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Thus, the night will be bright as the day now is, and the day will be seven-fold brighter than at present. There will be also the production of moisture, and abundant supplies of water, without originating from that great reservoir, the sea, which shall then be dried up. All this will be among the new things, which he that sitteth upon the throne shall then produce; and not the least wonderful shall be the change in the nature of wild animals, "when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling, together: and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den; they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. "From one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh go up to worship before him in his holy mountain at Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall then, indeed, be the place where men ought to worship, for the dispensation of faith being past, they shall see him, and worship at his footstool, for he is holy." It will be a new thing in the earth, when men shall turn their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and

shall learn war no more ; when there shall be universal peace, with abundant provision, and when no man will seek to over-reach his neighbour in any matter, but universal brotherhood shall be recognized, and the holy command, " thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," shall be cheerfully obeyed, and be as natural to men as the opposite principle is at present. Love, and peace, and truth shall be universal, when all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him. The kingdom shall be the Lord's, and he shall be the governor among the nations. Then disease and trouble will be unknown, for the inhabitants shall not say I am sick. Every man shall sit unmolested under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree. " They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat : for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isaiah lxxv. 22.)

" And he said unto me, write, for these words are true and faithful."

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is drawing to a close, and the words contained therein, are true and faithful ; not full of enigmas, and dark mysteries, which no man can understand, but true and faithful statements, or declarations respecting events which will certainly come to pass, according to the determinate purpose of him, whose counsels shall stand, and whose purposes none can disannul.

" And he said unto me, it is done, I am Alpha, and Omega, the beginning and the end ; I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

The events, commencing with the day on which the captain of our salvation girded on his sword upon his thigh, to go forth "conquering and to conquer," until he was seated on his throne, and had subdued, and overthrown all his enemies, are now recorded; and will one day be realized with all the minuteness with which Jehovah has always been known to realize his predictions. Not the slightest short-coming or most minute event, but shall be fulfilled to the very letter, and when all is fulfilled, then "it shall be done," for as the things concerning Messiah in his first coming had an end, so the things that relate to his second coming, also shall have an end. The revealer of this great vision is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; by whom are all things, and for whom are all things; by whom all things consist and are upheld; even the great God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, who is our hope.

Verse 7.—"He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son."

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" In this was manifested the love of God, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Whosoever therefore believes that Jesus is the Son of God, beholds the love of God in sending him, and so becomes reconciled to God; thus we love him, because he first loved us. We love him, because we are persuaded that he loves us, and gave his dearly beloved Son to be the propitiation for our sins; and

in this belief, continuing steadfast to the end, we overcome, and he that overcometh, shall inherit all things. "And I will be his God." He that sitteth upon the throne is the speaker, and counts it no robbery to declare himself God. He is in the Father, and the Father in him, and he who seeth him, seeth the Father; for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Yet in respect of the Father, his identity as the Son can never be changed, for there are three that bare record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; in which threefold name all nations are to be baptized, according to his final injunction to his Apostles, "go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew xxviii. 19.) Thus there are three persons, yet not three God's, but one God; and the worship is not a divided worship, as if one might now worship the Father, and at another time the Son. Our worship is the worship of one God, and this one God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Verse 8.—"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

There is here an enumeration of evil doers, who shall be the subjects of everlasting punishment; which includes all who forget God, "for the wicked shall be turned into hell, even all the nations that forget God;" and God is forgotten by all who *do not*

like to retain the knowledge of him in their hearts. Neither can the knowledge of God enter where evil is cherished and desired. The light cannot enter where the darkness is loved, therefore it is written, that "he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation (or the reason why men are condemned), that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; for every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light that his deeds should be reprov'd. But he who doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

Verse 9.—"And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

The prophet is now called to see, in vision, the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem; the place of which our Lord spake when he said, "in my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." As in this world, men call their lands after their own names, so the heavenly city is called after the name of her who is perpetually to abide therein: a city adorned as a bride adorned for her husband.

Verse 10.—"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. 11. Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal.

“ And he carried me away in the spirit.”

First, we find the Apostle in the spirit, on the Lord's day ; next, he was in the spirit, when a door being opened in heaven, he was enabled to contemplate the wonders therein revealed. At a subsequent part of this vision he was carried away in the spirit into the wilderness, to behold the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. And now he is carried away in the spirit to behold the city of the Lord of Hosts, the heavenly Jerusalem. He could have seen it from where he was, but the design in removing him, is to indicate to us the part of the earth toward which it shall descend, and this is shown by his being carried to a great and high mountain. It is the same mountain to which Ezekiel was carried, when “ in the visions of God he brought me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain,” where the description of the future temple to be erected for Jehovah's worship was seen ; in which temple is to be “ the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell among the children of Israel for ever.” It is the mountain referred to by the prophet Isaiah in the 2nd chapter. “ It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it, and many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. And he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” To this mountain the prophet was carried in spirit, and from thence, he beheld, descending out of heaven, that great city, the holy Jerusalem ;

he saw coming down, as if let gently down by cords, the house of God, not made with hands ; the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ; which hath no temple therein, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, but which is itself repeatedly declared in this book to be the temple of God. It is not as it were a new object, which the prophet had not before seen, for it was the same with that which he had formerly described in the 4th chapter, where the first, and the greatest object, presented to his view, was “a throne, and him that sat upon it. And he that sat, was to look upon, like a jasper, and a sardine stone, with a rain-bow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” This is the throne of God, of which he writes, “therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.” The throne of God is in his temple, and his temple is the same with the great city, the holy Jerusalem. There he beheld the golden altar which was before the throne, at which an angel stood ; having a golden censer, and much incense therein, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar. The hosts of heaven are represented as coming into, and going out from, this great temple. Thus, the seven angels, which had the seven vials, full of the seven last plagues, “came out of the temple,” and again, “no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.” The temple of God, now concealed from the eyes of men, will be disclosed to view at the appearing of the Lord, when the seventh angel shall sound, and the mystery of God be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. “Then the temple of God shall be opened in heaven, and there shall be seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” Angels are

repeatedly mentioned as coming on their messages of judgment out of the temple ; out of the temple which is in heaven, and out from the altar which is in the temple, and before the throne. . This temple will God cause to descend from the site which it now occupies, with all its glorious inhabitants, and furniture, into immediate conjunction with our earth, embracing within it the present site of Mount Zion, and rendering it literally and truly "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth." As the Most High appeared (as related in the 4th chapter) like unto a jasper, and a sardine stone, so here the city itself is said to have the glory of God, i. e., to reflect his glory, as the sun is reflected in the moon. The city receives the emanations of his glory, and is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Verse 12.—"And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names writtenthereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. 13. On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates. 14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. 15. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs; the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. 17. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits,

according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel. 18. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper ; the second, sapphire ; the third, a chalcedony ; the fourth, an emerald ; 20. The fifth, sardonyx ; the sixth, sardius ; the seventh, a chrysolite ; the eighth, beryl ; the ninth, a topaz ; the tenth, a chrysoprasus ; the eleventh, a jacinth ; the twelfth, an amethyst. 21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls ; every several gate was of one pearl : and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. 22. And I saw no temple therein : for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The wall, composed of jasper stones, is great and high : its measurement, a hundred and forty and four cubits, or two hundred and sixteen feet high. The gates are proportionable, corresponding in height with the wall, each gate consisting of one solid pearl. The entrance into the city is by twelve gates, each of which has its guardian angel, who shuts or opens, at the pleasure of him who sits upon the throne. Nor is it below the dignity of angels to be thus employed. When man sinned, and was driven forth from the garden of Eden, the Lord God placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. Thus, angels at the first were God's ministers, to debar access to the tree of life ; now they open the gates of admission to the tree of life, which is in

the midst of the paradise of God. The entrance is not by one, but by twelve gates, placed at equal distances from each other around the city ; three gates fronting the east, three gates fronting the west, three fronting the north, and three fronting the south. The gates have their respective names, each bearing the name of *one* of the twelve tribes of Israel, in the most convenient position for access to that tribe, so as each tribe may enter into the city through the gate bearing its own name, for God is the God of order. "Thus the tribes shall go up, even the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." Of these tribes, it is declared, that in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God. It is, therefore, literally to be received that on these twelve gates of massive pearl, there shall be names written thereon, and these the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The wall of the city shall have twelve foundations, a foundation being under every several gate ; and engraven in each foundation the name of one of the chosen twelve, whom Jesus ordained to be with him, and to continue with him in his temptations. "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit with me on thrones, judging (ruling or reigning over) the twelve tribes of Israel. Their names will be engraven as with the finger of God on the great foundations of this mighty and glorious structure. The angel who was commissioned to make John understand somewhat of this celestial, and now to become terrestrial paradise, has with him a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof ; to give him the dimensions ; surely to this intent,

that even now, in imagination, we may be realizing to ourselves that “inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away ;” that building of God, not made with hands. The city lieth four-square, and is not circular ; it is equal in length, and in breadth, and in height, and the measurement (each way) is twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles—how spacious, how ample, how glorious—containing innumerable mansions, as it is written, “in my Father’s house are many mansions.” The building of the wall is of jasper, and the city of pure gold ; not the street only, but all the buildings of pure gold, like unto clear glass ; and the foundations of the city are garnished with all manner of precious stones. Each of the twelve foundations on which the vast superstructure rests, consists of one solid and immense block of stone, each differing from another, and each stone a precious stone ; the first, a jasper ; the second, a sapphire ; the third, a chalcedony ; the fourth, an emerald ; the fifth, a sardonyx ; the sixth, a sardius ; the seventh, a chrysolite ; the eighth, a beryl ; the ninth, a topaz ; the tenth, a chrysoprasus ; the eleventh, a jacinth ; and the twelfth, an amethyst, the whole forming a combination of massive and shining gems. In the city there is no inner sanctuary or temple, which conceals his glory, “for they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. The city itself is the most holy place, for he says, “I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”

Verse 23.—“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the

light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. 26. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the the nations into it. 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The earthly Jerusalem will be absorbed or embraced in the heavenly Jerusalem. Of the former, the Lord hath said, "behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones; and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." And as it is true of the new Jerusalem that she hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, so shall it be true of the earthly Jerusalem, the city of the great king. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever—the branch of my planting, the work of my hands—that I may be glorified. The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night. When the great anger of the Lord is accomplished in the destruction of the

nations, the remnant who escape shall glorify God in the fires ; from the ends of the earth they shall lift up their voice, yea, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord ; then will the Lord have mercy upon them, and the time of great trouble will be followed by peace in all the earth ; “abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.” The whole earth shall be at rest, and be quiet, and break forth into singing. The prince of peace shall sit upon his throne, and the earth shall yield her increase. “God, even our own God, shall bless us, and all the ends of the world shall fear him.” The world will be re-peopled fast, and all the ends of it will render praises unto him. These then are the nations of them that are saved, who shall walk in the light that shall emanate from the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from our God. The chaos and fearful confusion caused by the “day of vengeance of our God,” will be gradually dispelled ; order, and harmony, and righteous government shall speedily be established, and by him “kings shall reign, and princes decree justice ;” and kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to Israel, “for the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish.” All nations will become tributary, and bow down at the soles of their feet. “Because of thy temple at Jerusalem, shall kings bring presents unto thee.” They shall bring presents unto him that ought to be feared. The nations will emulate each other in the offerings which they shall bring to lay at the feet of their incarnate God ; “they shall bring gold, and incense, and shall show forth the praises of the Lord. Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel.” The wealth of the

whole world will flow into the land of Israel, and violence shall be no more heard, wasting nor destruction within her borders. The nations will yield a willing allegiance to him that sitteth on the throne of David ; and to him as their great High Priest, they will bring their tithes, and offerings, and the first fruits of their increase to Jerusalem, the city of the great king ; Jerusalem, the throne of the Lord ; Jerusalem, the perfection of beauty, and the joy of the whole earth, yea, an eternal excellency, and a joy of many (i. e., of endless) generations. It shall be the city which all hearts shall pant after, because "the desire of all nations shall be there," even him who is the brightness of Jehovah's glory, and the express image of his person.

"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there"

Of the earthly Jerusalem, it is said, "thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. And again, "thy sun shall no more go down." Thus manifestly are the two cities blended in one, for of both are the gates to be kept perpetually open, and in neither is there to be any night ; no absence of light, no darkness, but perpetual and everlasting day.

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie : but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

The pure in heart alone shall see God ; impure souls shall not mar the beauty of that sacred resi-

dence. "An highway shall be there [i. e., it shall be accessible as an highway is accessible, and made use of by all comers], and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. Love will be diffused among all hearts, and sin, the bane of human happiness, will never again appear within those sacred walls; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."

THE THRONE OF GOD.

CHAPTER XXII.

1. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, preceding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2. In the midst of the street [or passage] of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The throne of God and of the Lamb is one ; neither are there two persons beheld seated on the throne, but the Lamb only, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. “ He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” “ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me.” The place of his throne is the Mount Zion, “ the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell among the children of Israel for ever. “ This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in ; “ yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever.” The pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne, is the same with that described by Ezekiel, where the waters issued out from under the threshold of the house. It is literally a spring, which shall arise from beneath the throne, issuing forth at first a rivulet, but rapidly enlarging, and becoming a mighty river, diffusing life, and health, and abundance over the whole earth.

Verse 3.—And there shall be no more curse :
but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall
be in it : and his servants shall serve him.

It was the earth which lay under the curse—"cursed is the ground for thy sake ; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee : " but now there shall be no more curse. " Instead of the thorn shall spring up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle-tree, and shall be to the Lord for a name, and for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off." The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, i. e., shall be in the earth, where formerly the curse rested, but now blessing. For there (in Mount Zion) the Lord shall command the blessing, even life for evermore. (Psalm cxxxiii.) That throne, which is now in heaven, shall then be upon the earth, for, " behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Verse 4.—And they shall see his face : and his
name shall be in their foreheads.

There is no higher honour than to be a servant of God ; no higher honour than to have Christ for our master ; they who so recognize him now, in their daily life and conversation, will be recognized by him as his servants in his eternal kingdom and glory ; and as it will be their highest honour to be his servants, so it will be their highest bliss to see his face : whose face is the face of God. Their glory and joy will ever be enlarging and increasing the longer that face is beheld, in which infinite fulness of beauty and excellence dwells. " And I will write upon him the name of my God." The impress of Jehovah shall be on their foreheads, for " them that honour me I will honour, saith the Lord."

Verse 5.—And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Night is caused by the absence of light, but in this glorious city the light will be perpetually shining in its full strength, emanating from the person of Emmanuel, whose brightness dims the lustre of the sun: neither will night be required where the body is never wearied nor fatigued. The bodies of the saints will be fashioned like unto the glorified body of Christ, the Shepherd of Israel, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth, for sleep is the image and figure of death. The body sleeps from weakness, and dies from weakness. It is sown in weakness, but it shall be raised in power; power, enduring power, without even the shadow of returning weakness or diminished strength; consequently sleep, which is temporary oblivion, would not be welcome nor desirable. Where there shall be no more death, there shall be no more sleep; no more night, and no more suspension of our physical or intellectual powers, but both shall be ever enlarging—"we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"—ever growing, more and more approximating to him in whom all fulness dwells; yet to the creature there will always be bounds, while, to the Creator, there are no bounds. So of Messiah's kingdom, not only will it be unending, but also eternally increasing, for "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever." Finally, the saints of the Most High shall reign for ever and ever. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we

shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And it doth not yet appear how or in what manner this endless succession of ages will have their full and unwearied occupation ; but the resources of wisdom, and power, and goodness of Jehovah, are infinite and endless, and will be put forth to the ever increasing joy and delight of the saints of God. As, when the foundations of the earth were laid, and the cornerstone thereof, the morning stars sang together, and the Sons of God shouted for joy, so shall there through eternity be ever new developments of the divine wisdom and glory, to call forth the unceasing hallelujah's of the redeemed before the throne, of whom it is written, in Revelation vii. 14, "these are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple : and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat : for the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

THE TEMPORARY RELEASE OF SATAN FROM HIS PRISON.

REVELATION, chapter 20th, verse 7.—And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. 8. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle ; the num-

ber of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city : and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

After an imprisonment in chains in the place of darkness—which is as darkness itself—for the long period of a thousand years, Satan is again admitted to the light of day. He had been shut up in the prison, viz., the bottomless pit, and even there not allowed to roam at pleasure, but kept within a certain limit or space, by that great chain to which he was fastened, a prey to his own dark thoughts ; powerless to do evil, which to him must have been the principal ingredient in his cup of misery ; brooding over the vast accumulation of evils which he had brought on the human race, as a small mitigation or drop of comfort to quench his parched soul ; for such is the character of him whose only pleasure is to do evil : a murderer from the beginning, a liar and the father of it ; the originator of evil, into whom the breath of rebellion first entered, and in whose soul the lust of covetousness first conceived. Alas ! he is the father of a numerous offspring ; for first he drew after him the third part of the stars of heaven—these morning stars who had sang together, but were now become wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever—and being permitted of God to test the probity of our first parents, overcame and ruined them and their whole posterity, saving only a very small remnant, whom God hath reserved for himself. These are his offspring, as our Lord testified to those who would not hearken to his words. "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the works of your

father ye will do." It is a fearful truth, that nearly all mankind are now, and have, in every age of the world, been the children of the Devil; led captive by him at his will, all unknown to themselves, and at death hurried down to that bottomless abyss—"the lower parts of the earth"—where light and hope are alike excluded; eventually to be visited, for the purpose of judgment and reconsignment in their re-embodied condition, to the lake of fire, which indeed is their old abode, the bowels of the earth, now converted into a vast furnace of fire. Nor is this picture at all exaggerated, but is in strict conformity with the words of the sentence, "depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." All this misery has originated with him, who doubtless was at first a prince among the angels; one of the chiefs of the orders of thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers. This prince of the power of the air, has been, as we have seen, ignominiously thrust into the dismal dungeon, and there securely inclosed for a period of a thousand years; but now, before his final overthrow there will be a short intermission during which he will have one solitary, but vast opportunity for mischief, the prospect of which may have formed, for the time, some alleviation to the wretchedness of his desolate abode. The hope of again seeing the light, and again putting forth his great powers to do evil, and involve still more multitudes in his own ruin, will make the present stern desolateness somewhat endurable. In that place of woe there is nothing by which to calculate the revolution of days, and weeks, and months, and years, so that time must hang heavily on its inmates; but the date of his release from prison came at length. It is not said that his angels shall be let loose with him, but neither is it said that they were imprisoned with him; so it may be inferred

that both in the imprisonment and release they are included with him, and this is confirmed by the words of the prophet, when he says, "that it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in prison, and after many days shall they be visited." The Devil and his angels go together; they sinned together, they were driven out of heaven together, they shall be cast together into the bottomless pit, from thence at the set time they shall emerge once more upon the earth for "a little season," to be thereafter consigned to "everlasting fire" in the place prepared for the Devil and his angels. When the thousand years are expired, the key will be applied to that lock, which no created power can open, until the commandment go forth from him "who openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth." At his word the door, or entrance into that awful gulf is thrown open, the chain is removed, and forth proceeds once more the Prince of Darkness, and without loss of time wings his way to the habitable parts of the earth. He goes out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, i. e., in the east, in the west, in the north, and in the south. But why is he permitted again to go forth and tempt the nations? It may be asked with equal propriety, why did the Almighty suffer the tempter to speak through the serpent to Eve, and by his lying representations, bring ruin on our race? It was because God saw it to be good, in order to the stability of endless generations, that the creature should be demonstrated to be of himself incapable of continuance in righteousness. Let God be true, and every man a liar. "Who art thou, O man, that repliest

against God ; shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus ? ” But a day is coming when God will fully vindicate the rectitude of his dealings with mankind, and then every mouth will be stopped, and all will confess that he is just. God permitted the wicked one to approach our first parents with his temptations, and did not, so far as we know, warn them of his approach, or even of his existence. It should have been sufficient for them to know that the Lord was their God, and that his commandment should be obeyed. They were under no moral necessity to disobey, it was their own deliberate choice ; they gave ear to the tempter, believed in his misrepresentations of God, and fell. Has not God a right to test and prove the probity of his intelligent creature ? Men may challenge his right to do so, but God is the judge of what is right and wrong, and will not be deterred from pursuing his own course by the opinions of men. Let the potsherds of the earth strive, and dispute with the potsherds of the earth, they may do so with impunity ; but woe to the man that striveth with his maker, woe to the man who dares to arraign his maker at the bar of his own judgment : it were better for that man that he had never been born. Hear the word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord. “ The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter’s house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter, so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you, as this potter, saith the Lord ; behold, as the clay

is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." But will he take advantage of his power over us to do injustice? God forbid. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? shall not he who has implanted in man the sense of right and wrong, do right himself? The Lord is holy in all his ways, and just in all his works; a just God and a Saviour, whose ways are equal, and all whose works are done in truth. It is then the divine will that the nations of the earth should once more be exposed to temptation from that old serpent the Devil; and this will form the last, the concluding scene of temptation, for immediately thereafter, the hour of his judgment shall have arrived, and with it, his final commitment to Gehenna, the hell of torment. The nations of the earth now spoken of, are the descendants of the remnant who were spared on that day when the inhabitants of the world were burned, and few men left, "when a man was more precious than gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." This remnant returned to the Lord, agreeably to that word, "when thy judgments are in the earth, the people (as many of them as still survive) shall learn righteousness. These shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall glorify him in the midst of the fires, they shall cry aloud from the ends of the earth. They shall remember and turn unto the Lord. From this period, and onward, incense, and a pure offering shall ascend unto him from every place, and men will rapidly multiply, and replenish the earth. "From one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." The earth shall yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. Such shall

be the greatly improved condition of mankind ; while God, who now is worshipped by faith, shall then be present, and visible in his holy mountain ; therefore shall they go and say, “ come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” He who is the brightness of the Father’s glory shall be seen, and shall be looked upon, and worshipped, both as the representative of the invisible God, and as himself the only living, and the only true God. Neither shall men say, show us the Father, for he who beholdeth the Son, beholdeth also the Father ; for the Father is in the Son, as the Son is in the Father ; Christ is God made visible, therefore shall men say, “ lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us ; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation.” The world will then be full of righteousness, as it now is full of iniquity ; and peace and truth shall pervade all nations. Such shall be the happy condition of mankind from century to century ; while every nation and kingdom will be tributary to Israel, and to him who is the King of Israel, and shall bring up of their abundance, their tithes, and their offerings, from year to year, unto Melchizedec the great High Priest, who shall receive them at their hands, and bless them in the name of Jehovah. After the lapse of many centuries, symptoms of insubordination and rebellion shall once more reappear, and many of the families of the earth shall become remiss in their annual visits to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles ; therefore, a law shall go forth, and a decree be enacted, “ that whoso will not come up of

all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, even upon them shall be no rain; and if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen, that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. Thus, from these and similar causes, it may be that the Holy One of Israel will be provoked to anger, so as to let loose upon them the tempter, by whose seductive influences, their lukewarmness, and growing indifference and coldness, shall rapidly break out into open rebellion; and this rebellion shall spread like wildfire, from kingdom to kingdom, from nation to nation, from east to west, and from north to south, in all the four quarters of the earth, until the number of those found in open rebellion shall be as the sand of the sea. The prophet is made to introduce the name or designation given to those revolting states, "Gog and Magog," which happily leads us to a source, from which more full information can be obtained of this unnatural, most wicked, and unprovoked rebellion. This information is contained in the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel. The events there predicted, are events which take place, long subsequent to the establishment of Messiah's kingdom upon the earth, and long after the time when the children of Israel are brought back from all the countries whither they had been scattered: are gathered on every side, and brought unto their own land, when the "Beloved" shall be their everlasting King, having descended from heaven for that purpose, that "he might reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there should be no end." These events take place a

thousand years after the peaceful and glorious reign of Christ has commenced ; for all enemies are not subdued unto him at his first coming to judgment and to government ; but now, at a thousand years distant from this beginning, do the inhabitants of the world appear to rise *en masse* against him, compassing the camp of the saints about, viz., the new Jerusalem, the circuit of which will be six thousand miles, and the beloved city. The prophet Ezekiel is commanded to take up his prophecy against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophecy against them. Thus saith the Lord God, I am against thee O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws ; and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords, Persia, Ethiopia, and Lybia with them ; all of them with shield and helmet. Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands, and many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.

EZEKIEL, chapter 38th, verse 8.—“ After many days thou shalt be visited : in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste : but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.”

Thus these associated nations shall come against the nations or people of Israel, who are now brought forth out of the countries, and are dwelling peaceably in their own land. The manner of the attack shall be sudden.

Verse 9.—“Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm ; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. 10. Thus saith the Lord God, it shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought. 11. And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages ; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates. 12. To take a spoil, and to take a prey ; to turn mine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that *are gathered out of the nations*, who have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.”

Judah, now for many centuries enriched by the contributions of all nations, to a degree of greatness and splendour far surpassing any previously existing kingdom, becomes at length an object of covetousness to the surrounding countries, and in an evil hour they resolve and combine together, to go and possess themselves of so much accumulated wealth.

Verse 13.—“Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, art thou come to take a spoil ? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey ? to carry away

silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil? 14. Therefore, Son of Man, prophesy and say unto Gog, thus saith the Lord God, in *that* day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? 15. And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: 16. And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land: it *shall be in the latter days*, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. 17. Thus saith the Lord God, art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days many years, that I would bring thee against them? 18. And it shall come to pass at the same time, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. 19. For in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath, have I spoken, surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; 20. So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, shall shake at my presence; and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. 21. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every

man's sword shall be against his brother. 22. And I will plead against him with pestilence and blood ; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. 23. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself ; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

Chapter 39th, verse 1.—"Therefore, thou Son of Man, prophesy against Gog, and say, thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshach and Jubal. 2. And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: 3. And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. 4. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that are with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. 5. Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. 6. And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles ; and they shall know that I am the Lord. 7. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel: and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the

Holy One in Israel. 8. Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God ; this is the day whereof I have spoken [viz., the day when these things shall have come to pass]. 9. And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the hand-staves and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years : 10. So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests ; for they shall burn the weapons with fire : and they shall spoil them that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God. 11. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea ; and it shall stop the noses of the passengers : and there shall they bury Gog, and all his multitude ; and they shall call it the valley of Hamon-gog. 12. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land. 13. Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them : and it shall be to them a renown, the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord God. 14. And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land, to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it : after the end of seven months shall they search. 15. And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall

he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. 16. And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land. 17. And, thou Son of Man, thus saith the Lord God, speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood. 18. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, and of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. 19. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. 20. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God. 21. And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment which I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. 22. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward. 23. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they tresspassed against me, therefore I hid my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: 25. But now will I have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name, 27.

And will be sanctified in them in the sight of many nations. 29. Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

The whole of this lengthened quotation from Ezekiel quite accords with the prophecy in Revelations: that the nations deceived came from the four quarters of the earth—Gog and Magog, or Gog the king of the territory, called Magog—that their number was exceeding great, even as the sand of the sea; that they went up on the breadth of the earth; that viewed from a high eminence, the whole face of the country was peopled with their masses in one dense body, as far as the eye could see; that the object in view was spoil, viz., to enrich themselves by plundering the people whom the Lord had chosen for himself. They encircled and inclosed the camp of the saints, and the beloved, or the holy city, which is Jerusalem; and finally, when they seemed just to be within grasp of their greatly coveted spoil,

THE HAND OF GOD FELL UPON THEM,

First, by a terrible earthquake, causing a mighty convulsion of nature, and throwing the armies into inextricable confusion, and causing every man's sword to be against his fellow; next by pouring down upon the masses an overflowing hailstorm of fire and brimstone, thus destroying the whole multitude; and finally, by burning up the country of Magog, with all its remaining inhabitants, with fire, leaving neither name nor remnant, son nor nephew, saith the Lord. The account given in Ezekiel of this great rebellion, and of the manner in which it shall be so speedily crushed, by the destruction of all its authors, is so circum-

stantial as to deserve to be transcribed at length, especially because it opens up to view the then existing condition of mankind. This will form the final outbreak in the world, for the great prime mover of sedition shall no more be allowed to tempt and seduce our race; and from this period, and henceforward, the whole earth shall be holiness to the Lord. It is, however, to be remembered, that at the beginning of Messiah's reign, the people of Israel were secured by an everlasting covenant, made exclusively with themselves, when "they shall be my people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul; and the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered." This is the covenant whereby Jehovah pledges himself, on behalf of that people, that he will so guard and defend their souls from the remotest approaches of evil, that not a single individual among their tribes shall ever fall into sin. This is his covenant with them, when he shall take away their sins, viz., that they shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies. "Sing ye to her, a vineyard of red wine, I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day." The vineyard of red wine is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and the declared purpose of Jehovah is to preserve them henceforth inviolable and untainted, an holy nation without rebuke,

unblameable in holiness before God. This is Jehovah's covenant with the house of Israel, but not with the nations of the earth ; they may, and do degenerate, as appears at the end of the first week (or thousand years) of Messiah's reign, when Satan, being set at liberty, becomes again the successful deceiver and corrupter of mankind—at least so large a portion of it that the number is declared to be as "the sand of the sea." The Scriptures close with the history and speedy suppression of this rebellion, and nothing is said as to whither it is to be the last, which is so devoutly to be wished ; but although not so said in express terms, there are good reasons for believing that rebellion will never again, through a coming eternity, disfigure the fair face of God's beautiful creation ; and among these reasons, this is perhaps the strongest, that, as Christ will reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet, when the last enemy—which is death—is destroyed, then "he shall have delivered up the kingdom unto God, even the Father." It is to be inferred that from henceforth, opposition to his most holy will shall no more exist, and that no future interruption will be suffered to mar the harmony and blessedness of the divine government. Indeed the possibility of such a contingency would itself be an alloy in the cup of joy ; therefore, with the suppression of this revolt, the reign of peace will be from henceforth uninterrupted—"abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth," i. e., for ever ; for his covenant with the ordinances of heaven, with the day and night, are, that they should not depart from before him ; day and night, sun and moon, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, are never intended to cease, but to last through all ages, world without end.

REVELATION, chapter 20th, verse 10.—“ And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Here terminates the history of the great originator of evil, the father of all rebellion, in whose breast the lust of ambition first found conception ; and lust, when it had conceived, brought forth sin ; and sin, when it was finished, brought forth death. The Lord, with his sore, and great, and strong sword, will now punish Leviathan, the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent. The Devil had, for the long period of a thousand years, been immured in the prison-house of darkness, but when permitted to revisit the scenes of his former crimes, he manifests all the unchanged characteristics of his being ; truly verifying the declaration, that he who is filthy, would continue filthy still. Hell is not a reformatory, but a place of endless punishment, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Men may sneer, and treat this as fabulous, but their unbelief will not alter the fact that to this accursed place shall every human being descend, who dies unreconciled to God ; for the wicked shall be turned into hell, **EVEN** all the nations that forget God. When the great enemy of mankind is cast into the lake of fire, he finds there two solitary beings before him, Antichrist and the false prophet, who wrought miracles before him. These both were cast alive, i. e., were cast body and soul, into hell a thousand years anterior to this date. Thus, the bottomless pit becomes the lake of fire ; at first small in proportion to the number of its inmates, but at last swelling out into awful proportions, when the whole of the vast concave, forming the inner circle of the globe

will become the receptacle of demons and condemned men. When the sentence on Satan is pronounced, it is to a punishment without intermission and without end. Within that sphere, where he had so long and so successfully practised his deceptions, he shall be engulfed, and the sight of the millions, whom he has brought to ruin, will not lighten the load of misery which he shall be made to endure !


THE JUDGMENT OF THE DEAD.

Verse 11.—“ And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. 12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God : and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of these things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. 14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

“ And I saw a great white throne.” When the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, and of all his holy angels, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations ; not, indeed, at the moment of his descent from heaven to our earth, nor for at least a period of a thousand years thereafter, but “ he shall judge the


quick and dead at his appearing, and his kingdom ;” the quick at his appearing, the dead during the period of his kingdom and government ; but first must be the judgment of the prime mover of all the evil, and then will follow in order the judgment of the masses of mankind. With respect to the throne, it is, then, the throne of judgment, not the throne of grace, for the day of grace is past, and men shall be judged according to their works ; it is the judgment-seat of Christ, before which all who ever lived must appear, and give account for the deeds done in the body ; it is the day of solemn and judicial reckoning, when every work of man will be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it hath been good, or whether it hath been evil ; it will be a tribunal, at which no external evidence, in the form of witnesses, will be necessary to vindicate the innocent, or condemn the guilty, for “all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do ;” all the secret springs of action, and the hidden things of darkness, shall be brought to light. He will not need any “to testify of man, for he knows what is in man,” and will, on that day, demonstrate his intimate knowledge of every human being ; he will recall to the wicked all their ungodly deeds, and all their hard speeches which they have spoken against him, and for “every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.” The whiteness of the throne is expressive of its purity, its equity, its impartiality. To those, who by patient continuance in well-doing, have in this life sought for glory, honour, and immortality, to them the judicial award shall be eternal life ; but to them who in this life have been contentious, and have not obeyed the truth, but have obeyed unrighteousness, to them the sentence shall be indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,

upon every soul of man that doeth evil, for there is no respect of persons with God. From the face of him who shall sit upon that throne, the earth and the heaven shall flee away, and "there shall be found no place for them;" just as when the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold was broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them. The thousand years are now finished, and the rest of the dead now live, even all who were not found worthy to obtain the first resurrection, for blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be kings and priests unto God. The rest of the dead are the large number, for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat; whereas strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. For hundreds that arose at his coming, millions shall now arise, and what mind can conceive the "terrors" of that day: as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; so hath eye not seen, nor ear heard, nor imagination pictured, the agonies of that soul to whom are addressed the words, "depart, ye cursed, into everlasting hell fire;" words pronounced by Him who changeth not, and from whose sentence there is no appeal. But where, on that day, shall there be standing room for such immense multitudes—probably upwards of two hundred thousand millions who will have to appear at the bar of judgment. A few hundred miles of level ground, or at most a thousand or two, will answer the purpose. It is not for us to investigate into matters beyond the barriers of revelation; it is



sufficient to be informed by Him, whose words fail not, that the dead, small and great, shall stand before God. Small and great, i. e., of all conditions and degrees; all shall stand undistinguished, and on an equal footing, for on that day there shall be no respect of persons. "And the books were opened : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books ; and they were judged every man according to their works." There is here declared a process of trial, and an individuality of judgment. Every individual will be made singly to appear at the tribunal, and have all his works brought into judgment, with every secret thing, and then and there be weighed in the balances, and adjudged of God, according as he is or is not found wanting, for judgment will be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plumb-line. The day of grace is to prepare us for the day of judgment. The day of judgment will be a day of judgment in righteousness. Knowing therefore the "terrors" of the Lord, we persuade men ! The judgment day is not a day of twenty-four hours, or years, it is a period which may probably occupy a thousand years, which is as one day with the Lord ; and it may be that the condemned may be kept in reserve until the individual judgment of all is terminated ; and then the judge, still on his great white throne, shall proceed to pronounce sentence on both classes in the aggregate, the good and the bad, the sheep and the goats ; he shall have all nations, in all their successive generations, of all who have ever lived before him, and shall divide them as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, and he shall place the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, "come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world, for I was an hungered, and ye

gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ; or thirsty, and gave thee drink ; when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ; or naked, and clothed thee ; or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee." And the King shall answer, and say unto them, "verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, "depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels, for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." Then shall they also answer him, saying, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, and sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" Then shall he answer them, saying, "verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. The righteous are received into everlasting habitations, and shall ever be with the Lord ; the duration is eternal with the righteous in their bliss, and with the wicked in their misery. Along with the books of judgment, there was another book opened, which is the book of life, and whosoever was not found written in this book, was adjudged to be cast into the lake of fire. In this book of life, the names of the whole human race are originally written, all



for whom Christ died (and he died for all) ; but there is a subsequent obliteration from this book of the names of all who count themselves unworthy of eternal life, by rejecting or putting it away from them. And further, if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

REVELATION XXII.—(*Continued.*)

6. And he said unto me, these sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7. Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8. And I John saw these things, and I heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

9. Then saith he unto me, see thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God.

10. And he saith unto me, seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book ; for the time is at hand.

11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12. And, behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17. And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth, say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book :

19. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20. He which testifieth these things sayeth, surely I come quickly ; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

“ And he said unto me, these sayings are faithful and true.”

This is not language which would be used concerning dark and mysterious announcements, couched in difficult and impenetrable imagery, but language which would be used concerning plain statements of events to be literally fulfilled, so plain, that the

Apostle, whose mind was unsophisticated and child-like, required no explanation, except such as was freely given him ; neither does he consider it necessary, in sending the book to the Seven Churches, to explain any mysterious parts of it, because there are none to explain. It contains a plain revelation of events, of which, indeed, our Lord gave a summary in reply to the interrogation of his disciples, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world ? The intention of the book is expressed at its commencement. It is given to show to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. He who sent and signified these things by his angel, unto his servant John, is the Lord God of the holy prophets, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty : being the highest name and title in the universe.

“ Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”

The time is coming that the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and darkness ; the meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. They are blessed who keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book, which surely implies that they understand them, and this is itself an evidence of literal signification being intended, *by its Author*. It will therefore be our wisdom to relinquish all dependance on commentators and expositors, and come in simplicity and godly sincerity to the book itself, and look for light from God who gave it ; and where diffi-

culties do occur, Scripture itself will be found the best interpreter of Scripture.

“ And I John saw these things, and heard them.”

It was from the first a series of successive visions, commencing with the 4th chapter, revealed to the Apostle while in a state of entrancement, expressed by the words, being “in the spirit.” He was possessed by, and filled with, the Holy Ghost, and while in that state, “ beheld visions of God,” a series of panoramic views, such as God only could produce ; living images of events hereafter to be literally fulfilled, and were written down on a roll, then and there : as we read that on one occasion when he was about to write, that a voice from heaven interdicted him, saying, “ seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.” He was also about the same time required to arise from his recumbent position, lay aside his pen, and take a measuring reed. “ Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” He was made both to hear and to see resemblances of things that were to be hereafter.” “ I John saw these things, and heard them.” When the number of the army of the horsemen were declared, “ I heard the number of them, and thus I saw the horses in the vision,” &c.

“ And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.”

This angel was one of the seven, who had the seven vials, clothed in white linen, whose commission it was to execute the fierceness of God’s anger on the guilty nations, and to fill up the full measure of his wrath ; all of them spirits of just men made perfect, men who

had come through great tribulation, and had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. John knew that God alone is the object of worship ; but such appears to have been the radiant glory of the angel before him, that he mistook him for him from whom his glory did proceed, and was about to offer to him the homage which is due only to God.

“ Then saith he unto me, see thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep [or preserve in memory] the sayings of this book : worship God.”

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is well known in heaven ; they keep the sayings thereof, and know all the incidents which will take place, from the opening of the first seal, when the captain of our salvation shall appear as the first in this terrible succession of judgments, and as the last in the final scene of the great drama, when heaven shall be opened, and he shall appear in righteousness to judge and make war. They who have finished their course, having kept the faith, and are past the goal, even the general assembly and church of the first-born, all keep the sayings of this book, and patiently wait for the promised salvation.

“ And he saith unto me, seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.”

The speaker is not now the angel, but the Lord himself, as appears from a continuation of the address ; and the command not to seal the sayings, is confirmatory of what has been already said, that, by the

artful device of the great enemy, this book has become as the "words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed; and it is delivered to one who is unlearned, saying, read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned." But our Lord declares that the sayings are *not sealed*, and we have here the highest authority for forbidding such interpretations as would make the book to be in effect sealed; but the time is at hand, the time when the sayings of this book shall receive a literal accomplishment, to the glory and praise of God.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Now, in this, the accepted time, in this, the day of salvation, the hearts of the disobedient may be changed into the wisdom of the just. The wicked man may turn from his wickedness and live, but there is a limit to the forbearance of God, and also to the possibility of change in men. When that limit has been reached, all beyond is fixture and permanency, either in good or evil. The time is at hand, when he that is unjust, shall never become just, but continue a reprobate for ever and ever; and the hereditary disease from which the glorious gospel of the blessed God was designed to deliver men, will remain. The good will be eternally good, and the bad eternally bad; and God will eternally continue his goodness to the good, and his curse will for ever rest on the bad; and with that curse, the withdrawment of every blessing which God has given, or can give, and the positive infliction of misery, such as language can-

not describe, nor mind conceive, "for they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation ; and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And they have no rest, day nor night, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." There will be the consciousness that the punishment is merited, and therefore just ; an accusing conscience will be the worm that dieth not ; and along with this, the fire that is not quenched, because operating on bodies which cannot be consumed. To the felon about to mount the scaffold, there remains this hope, that a few terrible pangs will terminate his sufferings, and all will then be over ; but to those who become the objects of the divine vengeance, there is no hope of alleviation, or termination to their sufferings. While God himself continues to exist, so must their misery. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, therefore "agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him (i. e., whilst it is the accepted time), lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. "Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt not come out thence until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." And how can he pay the uttermost farthing, who, being found unholy, unrighteous, and filthy, at the judgment seat of Christ, is to continue for ever in that state ! Now is the time for sinners to be converted. The redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever, if not accomplished now. God is not now the enemy, but the friend of man, for "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but should have everlasting life."

Because he can swear by no greater, he hath sworn by himself, "as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his wickedness and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" Die eternally, every soul must, who will not be turned from evil to good; when man's greatest friend becomes his enemy, he will continue to be so for ever. "As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." Oh! then, "kiss the Son before he be angry, and ye perish from the way. When his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Obedience to the commandments of him who is the Alpha and Omega, brings a present blessing; a future right to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God; as also, his commandments are not grievous, they all centre in one, viz., love. "My son, give me thine heart." Heart for heart, love for love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." It is of the essence of love that it should be reciprocated; with nothing short of this will divine love be satisfied; with nothing less than the devotion of our hearts can Christ be pleased to accept from us. This is the spring of all obedience. Give the heart and God will be content; he will ask no more, for he who truly gives his heart, gives his all.

“ For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

Without ! Where ? at the entrance to the city, in the fields, or in the surrounding country ? God forbid ! The time is past for the tares and the wheat to co-mingle ; “ let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather ye together, first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” The feet of the wicked shall no more tread upon the lot of the righteous ; the ears of the righteous shall no more be vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. Now all is changed, for “ besides all this there is a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot ; neither can they pass to us who could come from thence.” What then is the explanation of this word, “ without are dogs, &c. ?” Without the city there will be a mouth or opening to the dismal gulf, where the myriads of sufferers, who are the subjects of divine wrath, shall be exposed to shame and everlasting contempt ; for they shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb, and in the presence of all who shall be saved. For “ from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth (without the city), and look upon the bodies of the men that have transgressed against me : for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”

“ I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

The things testified are those contained in this book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants "things which must shortly come to pass." And he sent and signified them by his angel, unto his servant John, and through him, to one church, who would send the book to another, or multiply copies, until not only the Seven Churches in Asia, but all the churches, in all parts of the world, were in possession of it. These things were testified to the churches, in language capable of being understood, and no doubt were at the first well understood, simply because received in their literal signification, and according to all the other inspired communications, which are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The early Christians would read this book, as they would all the other Scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. He is the root and the offspring of David; David's Son and David's Lord. He also is the bright and the morning star, of whom Balaam prophesied, saying, "I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." The bright and the morning star is also the dayspring from on high, which, through the mercy of our God, hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace; the sun of righteousness who shall arise with healing in his wings. Until he comes, it is the hour and power of darkness: the covering is cast over all people, and the veil is spread over all nations, until

he appears to swallow up death in victory, and to illumine the earth with his glory. (Isaiah xxv.)

“And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

“Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.”

“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” “He that drinketh of this water, shall thirst again, but he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; for the water that I shall give, will be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.” This spake Jesus of the Holy Ghost, whom they who believed in him should receive, after that he was glorified. The Spirit of God with, and through the Church of God, who is the bride, invites all men, everywhere, to come and take the water of life freely. The water of life here referred to, and to which a universal invitation is given, is that mentioned in the first verse of the last chapter of Revelation. It is God’s gift to men, and is now conveyed in the form of a promise, just as it was to Abraham ; for “the gospel was preached to Abraham,” and that gospel was, that he should inherit the earth, be raised up to eat of the tree of life, and to drink of the water of life proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the lamb. The Spirit of God saith, come ; the invitation is to all men, and he who gives the invitation is “faithful and true.” When

an invitation is given to a feast, the sincerity of him who gives the invitation is not called in question, and men go to it with the confidence of being made welcome. If we receive invitations from men, the invitation of God is greater; and if we can place reliance on men, how much more may confidence be put in God, that all who come will be made welcome. The time of the feast is when the Lord shall come. When a man goes to a feast, he puts on befitting apparel, and would scarcely be admitted otherwise; so a white robe will be required at this great feast, but thanks be to God, it is provided for us. The white robe is "the Lord our righteousness;" to put it on, is simply to believe that he is so. All who thus believe, glory in him.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

"If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Why is this solemn warning given, and such fearful penalties denounced? Because he foresaw the great abuses to which the Apocalypse would be subjected, by the interpretations put upon it, and would have all men to know the consequences which will result to themselves, by thus dealing with his sacred word. Every man takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, who refuses to receive them in their plain literal signification; and every

man adds thereunto, who imposes other meanings on the words, than their natural construction bear.

“He who testifieth these things, saith, surely I come quickly.”

To testify, is to bear witness, or to make a declaration or statement. The Book of Revelation is a declaration of things which must shortly come to pass. The testifier is Christ, by the ministry of one of his brethren, here designated an angel. “I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.” This Jesus is also designated, as in the garden of Eden, “the Lord God.” “The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.” The testifier of these things, saith, “surely I come quickly.” It evidently is intended to be conveyed to our minds that this great event, “the coming and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ,” will not be protracted indefinitely, nor be out of proportion in time with events that are past. Jerusalem was only to be trodden under foot “until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled.” Many concurring events show that these times have well nigh reached their completion. A few centuries (probably not two) will terminate the short era, designated “time,” and introduce the long era, designated “eternity.” Two thousand years indeed have nearly elapsed since the Son of God pronounced these words in the ears of his beloved disciple, “surely I come quickly.” We are tempted to say, “the time is prolonged, and every vision faileth;” but his word cannot fail. Neither is the Lord slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should

come to repentance. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, and to them that look for him, he will appear the second time, without sin-offering, unto salvation.

“Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

This was the Apostle's response ; he did not dread, but fervently desired his coming, believing in “the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life ;” and all who so believe, will in like manner welcome his appearing, and rejoice in the prospect of it. Every man is called upon to live in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath in due time manifested his word through preaching. (Titus i. 2, 3.) Every man ought to believe that Christ died for his sins, according to the Scriptures ; that so being delivered from guilt, he might lift up his soul with confidence to God as a reconciled Father, and lay hold upon eternal life, which is God's unspeakable gift to all ; of which nothing can deprive us but unbelief. Every man who has embraced the blessed hope of everlasting life, given us through our Saviour Jesus Christ, will be enabled joyfully to join in the response of the Apostle, “even so, come Lord Jesus ;” and every man who hath this hope in him, will purify himself, even as God is pure.

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